CHINA

The Mysterious and Marvellous

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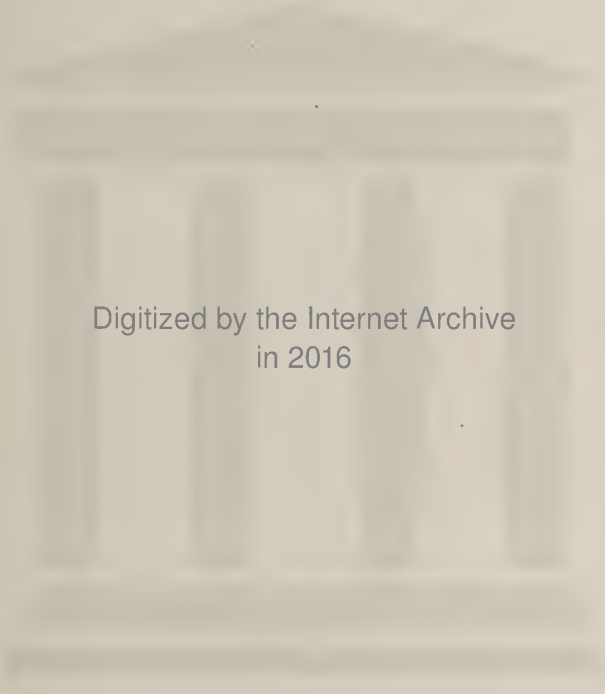

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China the Mysterious
and Marvellous

APPROACH TO A CITY GATE, CHUNG KING

China the Mysterious and Marvellous

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BY
VICTOR MURDOCK

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THAT IS TO SAY—

CHINA, after resisting change for forty centuries, is at last changing. An oriental republic has supplanted an ancient oriental monarchy. The old dragon of dynastic misrule is dead, and an age-old subject race is trying to conform to the requirements of democracy. The transition from the old way to the new way is unique and so variously manifested that perhaps the best record of the transition is by flash—a quick exposure of detached and fleeting scenes in the every-day life of the people. So the views in this volume seek to set down, topically and currently, the impressions of a traveller to the far interior of China and incidentally to Peking, the capital.

The cultural differences between the Orient and the Occident render China to a westerner's eyes mysterious as the factor of magnitude in the country's area, its population and its works render it marvellous. No change in government

will make China less so in either respect. With stabilization of the democratic form, and with the quickened growth of Christianity throughout the Republic which I believe must follow, China will change, but China, when changed, as in the period of transition, must remain China, mysterious and marvellous.

WASHINGTON, D. C. V. M.

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I

THE ORIENT, LABOUR AND CHRISTIANITY

IF one of my trade union friends in America should gather together all the organized labour men of his acquaintance some Sunday and see that they all went to church, they would fill every church in their town to overflowing, of course. They would also create a sensation. Now, the organized labour men would do just that thing if they could have seen what I have seen in Tokyo, Kobe and other places in Japan.

There is an explanation to be tied to this sort of a statement, of course. It is this: There is so much to be seen in Japan that you haven't any time to think, and the thought about organized labour was the first connected one I had had for a week. In the first place, as you travel into the Orient, you can feel the guy-ropes of civilization giving away hourly; in fact, by the time you have reached Japan you are cut loose for fair and, bewildered, your mind refuses to work.

It is all different—absolutely. The difference

can not be described. It never will be. I can just give glimpses of it. For one thing, humanity goes down on its heels. The nation squats—at work, at play and at rest. It sleeps on mats, with pillows about as big as two bricks and as hard. The ceilings are all low. Most of the traffic is on long two-wheeled trucks. Everywhere you see a single man pushing as much as a ton along, sometimes up very steep hills. When this is varied, it is in the shape of a similar truck pulled by a stocky, and invariably vicious Siberian stallion. The majority of the people are desperately poor. In the summer season the labourers do not wear much, many of them are all but naked. They make the thing we know as modesty quite a complicated product of society. The nation is chock full of people, and they are all busy. They do not think as we do, they do not dress as we do, nor eat our food. Their worship is not intelligible to us in any satisfactory degree—it is idolatrous in large part. Yet this civilization has the very best of railroads, fine street car systems, the smallest towns have electric lights, and there are first-class water systems, and to back it up is one of the best armies and navies in the world.

You take off your hat to Japan because she has done so much, and so much more than the

rest of the Orient, and then you put the hard condition on her that she must do justice to labour, and justice to labour on the occidental standard. It is either that or a world cataclysm. And I don't believe in the cataclysm.

I dug out this thought sitting in a sleeper. All around me were Japanese in flowing gowns and two-toed socks—first-class passengers and very prosperous looking—and rather high-headed. The porter was making down the berths, which are almost as shallow as saucers, and I was figuring on sleeping with my clothes on. The man in the seat next to mine was putting his pajamas on in the aisle unblushingly, and just beyond him two pretty Japanese girls were sitting on the floor smoking cigarettes.

This thought struck me like lightning out of the blue—that the Orient must either take over Christianity and democracy (and they are the same thing) or the west will have to make a fight for it.

For you don't get very far into the Orient before this Christianity idea strikes you like a slap in the face. The east can use all the mechanical devices which make for progress as easily and as effectively as the west—but these mechanical devices can not be absorbed into society and assimilated by society without

Christianity and democracy. Now it is a two and two make four proposition that a machine which displaces a half dozen men in a country like Japan, which has an overplus of labour, is a dastard thing. There is only one way to meet the problem—and that is by caring for labour—and that can't be done by adding more machinery or scrapping that already at work. There is only one way to care for labour, and that is on the Christian basis that the labourer is worthy of his hire and sequentially that all labour is justly compensated only when the Christian virtues—and chief among them a practical, workaday brotherhood—are put into the equation. Or if you want it in more concrete form —a nation must work to bestow a living wage, to shorten the hours of labour, to make working conditions sanitary and decent, and to see that all are employed, that children are not, and above all to decree, not only in law, but in practice, that flesh and blood, that is labour is not a commodity to be bought and sold, but is a right inherent in the process of living. Whatever we have of this in the west—and we have considerable—we owe to Christianity. One is not so apt to see it as vividly in the west as he is when he moves away and looks back at it. It is then plain enough. All the mechanical de-

vices I saw in Japan—and they are many—were being run with as much facility as you will see them in America, but the labour conditions are unnerving. They are unChristian.

Of course, I can hear somebody saying just at this point, "He is overstating his point. He is letting his sympathies run away with him." I am doing nothing of the kind. I am stating a perfectly demonstrable condition. I have watched five hundred Japanese men, women and children coaling a vessel at Nagasaki. They started in at 9 o'clock in the morning and worked until 5 o'clock that night. On each barge were about fifty people. They ran the barge alongside and put up a ladder. On the ladder they stationed twenty-five men, women and children. Twenty formed themselves in a row on the barge. Two men loaded half-bushel baskets with shovels, two others lifted them to the first man, who passed them on to the second, and so on up the ladder into the ship—the line passing thirty-six to forty baskets a minute—for eight hours. About half the time it rained pitchforks on them. Are they used to it? Of course, they are. But in the last two hours I saw young girls, bright, intelligent, tender girls, who were ready to drop in their tracks.

Several people told me that this was one of

the "most interesting sights" in the east. I went up to Bishop Robinson of the Methodist church (he is bishop of India) and asked: "What do you think of this?"

He said: "I think it is awful."

I asked: "Was it ever intended that man should be a beast of burden?"

He answered: "It never was."

And it never was. If there is any unChristian country in the world that doesn't make him one, I never heard of it, and if there is a Christian country where the tendency is not always away from that condition, I do not know where it is. It was that thought which gave me the fancy about the labour union men storming the churches. Christianity is far and away their best friend.

I believe the east will take Christianity. Of course, the missionaries are few among the millions of the east, and they have a hard time getting their seeds to sprout. But they will sprout. It is a little leaven, but it will leaven the whole lump. But if the east rejects the religion which has dignified labour, then there is coming an industrial war which will shake the world. Japan is leading the way for the Orient to throw its teeming millions into machine production—without limitation on hours of labour or restric-

tion on age of workers, and free from the cost of decent conditions. Against this flood of production the west must protect itself, but it must also preserve that which has given labour its right—that is Christianity. The best way to preserve it is to inoculate the east with it.

On the ship coming across the Pacific a good deal of caste develops. There are a good many missionaries aboard, and those who are not missionaries are terribly afraid that somebody will mistake them for missionaries. There is, quietly and under cover, a lot of fun poked at the missionaries by the commercial class.

It rather amuses me. For I think I know that the east would eventually eat the west up, industrially and commercially, were it not for these quiet, praying, hymn-singing folk, these self-same missionaries.

II

A QUALIFIED RACIAL FRIENDSHIP

ONE of the first things you run across in Japan is the way the resident white people swallow when the newcomer compliments the Japanese in their presence. The resident white man down under his skin doesn't like the Japanese nation. Of course, he doesn't confess it; in fact, ordinarily you couldn't pull the confession out of him with a cork-screw. But the dislike is there, just the same, and anybody who can tell a ham from a hand-spike can see that it is.

You begin to pick it up out in California before you start to the Orient. Any American who visits the western coast will bear me out in the statement that one of the favorite contentions of the Californian is that a Chinese is much more desirable than the Japanese; that he is more given to honesty and fidelity and so forth. Well, that contention is given the loud pedal in the Orient. The white man extols the

Chinaman, and takes on a grim silence when someone extols the Japanese.

Now, the real trouble is that the Jap has been seriously asserting his right to equality, and that the white man doesn't like.

I spoke commendingly of Japan's progress at Kyoto, and a theretofore quiescent white man erupted with: "Don't do it; they're puffed out of shape already."

An Englishman said to me: "We fought for our progress; the advantages we have in the sciences, in government, in industry, we Anglo-Saxons bled for during generations. The Japanese came along and appropriated the results of our labour. I would not help them so much as by raising my finger."

I do not find in books, and I have not found here in Japan, the reason why Japan blossomed forth as she did. As late as 1859 the country was sealed; that is, foreigners were absolutely barred, and had been for hundreds of years. But Japan suddenly broke loose, and one of the chief determinate factors in western civilization appearing to be military power, she bought a few ships and hitched up her chair. She swiped the ancient empire of China across the face, and then trimmed the mighty Russia with neatness and dispatch, and has since been trying to find

the money to help pay the expenses of the picnic. She butted into the European war long enough to put a tap on the point of Germany's chin in China, in memory of an old insult, but has otherwise remained docile. And yet every ambitious white nation on earth is keeping an eye on Japan, and not the least watchful among them are her dearest friends—England included. The attitude of the individual white man is the same; he is a friend of the Japanese, but—

From the beginning of western civilization the white man has used the same formula for everybody. He assured the American Indian that he was his friend, and bumped him off his land. He also drifted down to South Africa and became a friend of the Kafir and put him to work—for the white man.

And in the last thirty years China has loomed up as a pretty good thing. The white man assured the Chinaman that he was the Chinaman's friend, and began grabbing his best harbours.

Then Japan stepped in with a smile—and a sword—and said she was a friend of the white man—but—and the white man has been squirming ever since. The white man doesn't like that "but" when the Japanese use it. It has the look of a dangerous reservation about it. It

doesn't sound precisely sincere, and it is impudent.

For the Japanese is the first Oriental people since Tamerlane to put a "but" into its protestation of friendship for the white man.

While the white men have been fighting among themselves, Japan has been trying busily to hog-tie China for private use, China, the biggest undeveloped market on earth.

Will Japan get away with it? I do not think so. But it must be acknowledged that she has been at the job in a workman-like way. She is being a friend to everybody, but—

Now, it is a pretty extreme thing to say, but I do not believe that Japan understands one thing—that the white man will either survive or perish—that is, he will either dominate or die. With this view in mind I have been studying the Japanese here in Japan with a great deal of interest. A bright, intelligent, capable people they are, and since their truly wonderful successes in arts, industries and arms, a very proud people. And as this pride grows—and it will—it will lead them to the precipice. Pride is the most dangerous quality on earth in a man or in a nation. There is always a trap-door in its path. I don't think the Japanese know this, certainly not as surely as the white man does,

and the white man is constantly forgetting it, and if I were a Japanese I think I would sally forth and preach the doctrine of an humble and contrite heart, for the good of the nation.

For pride will lead Japan into the expansion which is the mild word for aggression. It has already begun with the Chinese policy. By playing one white nation off against the other Japan will undoubtedly make great headway, and will convince herself that success has been attained and will rise to new heights of pride. And the day will come, as in this game it always comes, when Japan will seek openly to compel the west's friendship, as she compelled Russia's friendship, and with that day will come Japan's hour of humiliation at the hands of the white man, who will either dominate or die.

From what I can pick up, the United States could build up a lasting alliance with this nation —but only by a whole-hearted spirit of genuine amity. It will have to be without guile. It can not have reservation. And it will have to show stronger foundations than fair words. The people of the United States will have to recognize that Japan has her problems—among them overpopulation—that she is legitimately moved by proper ambitions, and that she has her place in the development of the east (China in particu-

lar), which must be respected. At the same time Japan should be, in her attitude to America, eager to help the American in the Chinese market, anxious for co-operation and to give up once and for all the idea that America can be frightened permanently into a timid, acquiescent foreign policy. She ought to call her spies in America home and keep them home.

I don't say that there will be any such permanent, genuine fix-up between the two nations. I think there could be.

Probably the statesmen of Japan want it so. I do not know, of course. But the people of Japan, once our unselfish friends, are drifting away from us. A Japanese told me recently how the sentiment was agitated. He said he had heard a Japanese orator tell a crowd this:

He was on the back seat of an automobile in San Francisco and his hat blew off. An American citizen, well-dressed and apparently well-to-do, picked it up and started to hand it to him, and then seeing he was a Japanese, threw the hat on the ground.

Maybe, my informant told me, that Japanese crowd didn't howl.

There is a better way than this—both for America and Japan.

III

A FILM OF NEW AND OLD JAPAN

IT is easy moving around in Japan. In the first place, the Japanese put directions in English on sign posts. That helps. At many of the stations there are big sign boards bearing reading matter under the heading: "Places of interest." I think it is a great idea. The town tells what it has that the traveler should see. It is a Japanese scheme, and worthy of imitation everywhere. People have said that the Japanese lack invention. I don't think so. For instance, I found that if you want to go out on the railroad platform to see a friend off, you can buy a platform ticket for a cent and do it. I would like to know if American station agents have any kick on that, and I am sure the union depot companies would like the revenue.

I have tried everything here in the way of conveyances except automobiles, and the streets are so crowded with children that I refused to put my nerves on the rack. First I tried a rick-

shaw. As you know, a rickshaw is an overgrown baby buggy, mounted on two wheels, with a man between the shafts. He runs. He always runs, and in this country he throws his legs away out behind—so far out behind that at first I expected my man to fall over on his face. If a rickshaw man didn't run, he would cause excitement. In fact, I had just that experience. I wanted to shop a bit in Tokyo, and I wanted to walk. My small daughter, aged ten, had gotten the rickshaw habit bad and she rode. But I told the rickshaw man to walk alongside. It liked to have caused a riot among the other rickshaw men. They were convulsed at our man walking. They kicked up their heels, fell into one another's arms in sheer joy and hid their smiles behind their hands. Our man was a proud fellow, and sensible, too, and he kept his head up in the air and never let on that he knew they were guying him, but once he turned to me and gave me a smile which was the Japanese equivalent for a wink.

When we reached the store we tried to get in, but were halted, and after a little I made out what the trouble was. The porters at the front door were checking shoes, and then I discovered that we couldn't get in unless we took off our shoes. Mine were high laced boots, and I was

about to turn back when I found that there was a compromise scheme—a porter would put velvet overshoes on your feet without the necessity of removing the regular ones. So I stuck out my feet and he outfitted me with a pair of goloshes, half green and half yellow, and we sallied into the store. It was carpeted in spotless matting, and was the finest store I have ever visited. There is nothing in Paris to compare with it. People didn't seem to be buying. They were just wandering around and looking, and listening to an orchestra made up of a piano and violins. Now the piano was a normal one, and so were the violins, and so was the music—they were playing "A Perfect Day," but the way they had those musicians togged out was a caution. They wore red coats, loaded down with gold braid, and their hats were military helmets with white plumes sticking up in the air like tassels of milo maize. I couldn't hear the music for looking at those tassels.

We made our purchases and went back along the streets. The impression you get everywhere is that Japan is just peeking out of the Oriental shell into the western world. You will pass a Japanese, dressed in the height of western fashion; then another with a robe and a lady's fan; and then another with nothing but

a breech-clout and a hat on, and we passed one fellow who didn't have any breeches on, but was wearing a derby and twirling a cane.

Right beside this magnificent store, which I have not in the least exaggerated, stood a shop which sold dried fish—so dry they looked like shingles—and canned goods. The ceiling was so low that no one could get in without stooping, and the merchant was sitting on the floor with his family around him and one little kiddy stuck up on the shelf among the cans.

You will find a native newspaper office and peer through into the press room and see and hear a big press buzzing exactly as the perfecting press, upon which an American newspaper is printed, buzzes. Then next door will come a row of lattice windows out of which will float the strum of an instrument, the like of which you never heard before, and the strains of a weird song that might have been sung when they were building the pyramids in Egypt, it is so utterly different from anything that ever drifted to your ears before.

That is, a Japanese city is a moving film of new and old, of ancient and modern, a mixture of the first century and the twentieth, a hash of Rudyard Kipling and Marco Polo, and just walking about you get decidedly woozy in your

think-machine. Things don't connect. They don't parse and you finally get to doubting whether two and two in this country actually make four.

Of course, you think I am overstating the case. But I am not, and you will know I am not when I tell you that in my rambles I paused outside a movie theatre to hear the "Sextette from Lucia" on a Victrola for five minutes and spent the next five minutes standing before a gold god with about a hundred dirty cotton bibs tied under his chin, while a priest knelt down in front of him beating a gourd with a long drumstick and mumbling, like a bumble-bee, to himself a wail that was covered with moss centuries before Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt.

IV

CHINA'S JOSS WORSHIP

ONE comes to China through Japan as through a vestibule. I am told that I will change my mind about the vestibule when I have seen the house. Perhaps. But here is China. There was a big Chinese holiday in progress when I arrived in Shanghai, and I spent some time in a joss-house and saw many curious things. But before I recount what I saw I will have to make a little excursion with your mind.

If you will go to any public school this afternoon about four o'clock and follow a crowd of small boys away and watch them at their play, you will witness some things that you can not explain. A good healthy boy of ten will take an ordinary broomstick, straddle it, and after riding it around for a few minutes, will turn it into a better horse than Jehu ever drove. In the same way if you will slip up on your small daughter this afternoon you will probably find

her playing with a pillow which she has turned, by the same magic, into a baby, to which she will be talking a world of maternal nonsense.

That is, your own boy and girl have something you haven't. It is imagination—but imagination plus something else—that something else is childhood. Now I have been rummaging around to find a common denominator for China and America, and this is the only one I can find—childhood. China is in her childhood—whether the first or second childhood I am unable to say at this moment. I suspect the second.

Shanghai is bifurcated—the white folks have one city and the Chinese the other. I made for the Chinese city. First I tried to strike a bargain with my rickshaw man, but I couldn't do it.

"What will you take me to the Chinese city for?" I asked.

"You say," he said.

"But I won't," I said. "How much do you want?"

"You say," he reiterated.

So I crawled into the rickshaw and set forth and finally arrived near the temple. Then I went through the whole thing over again. I wanted to know how much I was to be stung, and all he would answer was "You say."

So I told him to wait, and made my way into the temple through a crowd that was truly motley and the noisiest bunch I have ever met —bar nothing, even a bulletin board crowd city election night at home. A Chinese loves noise with an exceeding great love. He will be walking along the street alone and will suddenly break into oratory. In a trade, the clerks, who sit at the only counter (it is cross-way of the store and at the front), all snort at once and the customer goes back at them like the boy who is "it" in the game of "old sow." On the street corner a man in rags was playing a gourd with a single gut string and while he had a big audience of ragamuffins, they were doing so much talking that he wasn't making himself heard. Along came a row of rickshaws with every man whooping at the pedestrians and back of them a carriage, the driver of which was waving a whip with a feather-duster for a cracker (all whips are so equipped here) and whooping, and through it all slowly and majestically moved a procession. In front of this cavalcade were three men with gongs, which they beat spasmodically, back of them was a group of men carrying big paper lanterns, back of them a seven-piece brass band, back of that a carriage, closed, not with curtains, but with

shutters, and back of it more lanterns, and then an open carriage with two pretty Chinese young women. It was an even bet whether it was a wedding or a funeral. The closed carriage held either a corpse or a groom. There was no way I could tell which—and just then there was a riot. In the upper room of a two-story house, somebody hit another gong, there was a deafening outbreak of voices, and then a succession of sounds as of breaking crockery—like a man would make hunting a rat in a china store with a scythe. Now I was the only man on the scene who was doing any listening. Everybody else was making noise. I got into a big tea-garden, which was deserted by the way, and finally came up to a big benevolent bearded old man who quickly shut two big black doors back of him. I knew he shut them on purpose, so I said:

"How much?"

"You say," he said, or anyway I thought he said it. So I fished out a coin (value, a nickel), he bowed, opened the doors and let me in.

The chamber was crowded with human beings worshipping; in front of them were two rows of "soldier josses." There were seven josses in each row. They were made of pine, with faces fairly sculptured, the tops of their heads painted black to represent hats, their skirts painted red.

It was a poor job of painting, for they were terribly blistered and all smoked up. Each wore a club-like beard, such as you see in Egyptian sculpture. In front of each row was a trough in which little pieces of silvered paper were being burned and also in front of some of the favorites a few odd-looking candles. There was at once a great clamour that I buy some of those little pieces of paper and burn them. I bought a handful for a penny and picked out my joss. I wanted to get a real good looking god, but when I glanced them over, they all looked alike—finally I picked out one whose left eye had scaled off and burned my offering before him.

You would naturally suppose that this action of a foreigner would cause some surprise. It did not. I suppose that my action was as inexplicable to those Chinese as their worship was to me.

Your first thought is this: How can any mature human being, even if he is heathen, believe in a block of wood? These people are good tradesmen, they are bully seamen, within their lights they are virtuous, in commerce they are honest, they are faithful to a trust, and in certain conditions courageous. They have wills, consciences and souls. Then why don't they know that these fourteen old blocks of

wood were fashioned by human hands, and are blocks of wood just as much as they were when they grew in the forest? Why doesn't it occur to them that intercession for help to one of these effigies is as useless as picking out a tree anywhere and crying to it for help? On my way back out of the Chinese city I fumbled around a long time to get the answer, and the one thing I struck upon that was at all satisfactory was that idea of childhood which turns a broomstick into a horse. And then I had another idea—how modern civilization turns gold and power and place into idols and gets down on its marrow bones before them—and I quit.

V

CRUDE FARMING, FANCIFUL LEGENDS

HANKOW is up in the interior of China. It is on the way to Chung-King. I am bound for Chung-King, which is about eighteen hundred miles from the coast.

Now, the only way to get to Chung-King is to keep going. Our instructions before starting were: "Listen to no one. Keep on coming." That takes nerve. When we were nearing Shanghai the captain of the trans-Pacific ship called me to him and said: "I have bad news for you; the pilot says that you can't reach Chung-King; the boats on the upper river have all been commandeered by the Chinese government to move troops, on account of the rebellion. You might take a junk, but I want to tell you it is dangerous."

When we reached Shanghai and notified the steamboat offices that we were traveling to Chung-King, the men there threw up their hands and said: "You can't make it, and even if

you did you can't get back until next spring."

But we put up our banner emblazoned: "Keep on coming," and said we were going anyway. And we suspected that at Shanghai they don't know as much about Chung-King as a cat knows about astronomy. And they don't. They know about Hankow, and at Hankow they know about Ichang, which is six hundred miles farther up the river, and at Ichang they know about Chung-King. In another week we would be at Ichang, and then we would begin to find out about transportation to Chung-King. But you can't find out about it at Hankow. You simply have to wait till you come to the end of one journey before you find out what is at the other end. A line of boats runs from Shanghai to Hankow. Another line runs from Hankow to Ichang, and then a boat is rumored to run from Ichang to Chung-King. If the rumor is correct, you can make the journey from Shanghai to Chung-King in a little less than three weeks.

Meanwhile between Hankow and Shanghai I saw what is to my mind the most beautiful agricultural country in the world. We were the only white passengers on board, so there was nothing to do but to sit and look at the shore as we glided past.

When I studied geography, we knew a little

line that wiggled straight westward through China as the "Yangtse-Kiang." Over here they drop the "Kiang" and call it "Yangtse." It runs westward through China up to the Himalayas (accent over here on "mal"). It divides the country into North and South China. Whatever foreign nation ever seizes it will control China. Up to Hankow it runs through a yellow alluvial soil. Its water is tawny—much more so than the Missouri. It is more nearly straight than the Mississippi—its current is about four miles an hour, and it is over a mile wide at Hankow—and this is 800 miles from its mouth. It seems to be free from the eddies and boilings which one sees in the Arkansas river. Its channel runs about fifteen fathoms. On its lower reaches it is fed by thousands of creeks, upon which ply thousands of native boats, so that, looking from the river, the fields all about you seem to be growing sails and masts. Near the sea there are no levees, and the country, being subject to inundations, is not put to much use. But on the second and third days' journey up, the banks become a little higher, and the second bottoms are well up out of the reach of floods. Nearby all along the bottoms are low hills, and ten or twenty miles back from the river beautiful mountains. I should say that anything that

will grow in the temperate zone will grow along this river. I don't believe there can be a more fertile soil on the earth. The farmers of the Mississippi valley could make it a Garden of Eden. The Chinese have not. Much of it appears as waste, or devoted to such volunteer crops as rushes. I saw no clovers. The only cattle visible were a few water-buffalo. In eight hundred miles I saw but two horses. There was not as much rice as one would expect. I saw many fields of Indian maize, but the Chinaman has let the grain deteriorate, and the ears I saw were not much bigger than our pop-corn. All sorts of garden truck is first-class, although the Irish potato is undersized—which, again, is not the fault of the soil Peanuts, which are raised in abundance, are also undersized. By the way, these are harvested by running the whole top soil through sieves. All that doesn't go through are peanuts and stones. I saw no farm machinery of any kind. Everything, of course, is done by the crudest of hand labour. The tree growth, which in appearance is much like that along the small streams in America, is abundant.

We passed many Chinese cities on the way up to Hankow. They all look pretty much alike. The first thing in view is the pagoda, usually located on top of a hill and usually with a

bunch of weeds or a bush growing out of the crumbling roof. Beneath it one will see an ancient wall—as thin as a strawberry box—and inside a two-story house—the home of the priest. Over on another hill will be a pretentious American-looking structure—the school or the hospital of the missionaries. The mass of the city is made up of one-story, low-ceilinged houses without eaves. The streets, of course, are narrow, roughly paved and crooked.

There is no more majestic river under the sun than this Yangtse. But China hasn't done much for it. While it is a little early for me to pass judgment on the Chinese, I can't help but think that it is time that more contact with steam, electricity and the hundred other agencies of civilization should be taking hold. Perhaps John D. Rockefeller will lead the way. He is selling them kerosene, and it may bring them around gently to our ways. For at all the larger points along the river you will see a group of familiar tanks, enclosed in a neat fence and a sign above bearing two Chinese characters which look like the model of a patent gate. Translated, this means "The Beautiful Oil Company," there being no Chinese word for Standard. The Standard Oil establishments are by far the niftiest things one sees in the Orient—

they spell order, cleanliness and—light.

And China needs light. She is living in legends. Legends are all right, but no people has a right to believe them.

We passed on the river the city of Tai-Ping-Fu with its three-story pagoda. A little way up the river is an island with two stories of a pagoda on it. The tale runs that the devil came along one night and stole these two bottom stories from under the Tai-Ping-Fu pagoda and made off with them. Dawn, however, overtook him, and the devil, not being able to stand light, let the two stories drop. Farther up the river we passed Ngan-King with a fine seven-story pagoda, and stuck in the ground at its base were two big anchors to which the tower is chained. A thousand years ago or so the Ngan-King crowd heard about the devil's monkeyshines down at Tai-Ping-Fu, so they decided to take no chances and added the anchors.

That was all right—a thousand years ago—and it is a bully legend, as legends go, but nobody has a right to believe in these anchors to-day. And somehow I can't help but believe that if these folks get enough kerosene mixed up in their daily economics—they will light up the pagoda at night, scare the devil away, and surrender their faith in those anchors.

VI

ABSORPTION A CHINESE SPECIALTY

WHILE you will gather from the newspapers and the magazines from time to time that there is great official fear in China over the designs of Japan upon the integrity of China, and it is true, there is a considerable party or school among the Chinese who favor letting the Japanese come in and do their worst.

The position of this school is as follows: "Let the Japanese take China if they want to. They will help us, and in the end we will take the Japanese, as we have taken everybody else, and as we will always take everybody."

That is, the Chinese believe that they will simply absorb anybody who comes in contact with them, as indeed they have absorbed their successive conquerors—the Mongolians and the Manchus.

Their attitude we are apt to ascribe to a gigantic apathy, a national docility, when, in

truth, it is national persistence and tenacity. The trait, as I found it here, was not precisely new to me. Sometimes one may see a whole nation through one man. In my boyhood I lived in a frontier town. Charley Sing came to dwell among us. Instead of renting a twenty-five-foot building, he got himself a shanty between two normal store rooms. Charley Sing's laundry was about four feet wide. Its front was painted a porcelain blue. Inside he had the picture of a joss, and before it he burned sticks of incense. He prospered mightily in the old days, before the steam laundries, and finally went back to China, trading his laundry and his name with it to a new Chinese. I knew the original Charley Sing well. He gave me little presents, and the first preserved ginger I ever tasted was at his hands. Now the thing I noticed most about Charley Sing, when I was a boy, was the fact that we didn't change him. He got so he spoke pretty good English, and he wore our clothes, but he kept his pig-tail, gave out Chinese script for checks and receipts, sprinkled the clothes by squirting water between his teeth and observed Chinese New Years in February with as much ceremony as though it were a national American holiday. He remained Chinese, and, similarly, China will remain China.

There is a lot of plain, unadorned pig-headedness about it. Every nation in the world in the last thirty years has used China as a doormat. They have seized her ports, grabbed her land, battered her capital, looted her palaces, but many of the Chinese officials still imagine that all nations in the world are subject to China. In the same way, the Chinese themselves defend their customs when reason is clearly against them, as, in their topsy-turvy way of doing things, it frequently is. There is no argument against them if they want to use white instead of black for mourning; or if they like eating their pie before their meat; or if they persist in putting the caboose at the head of the freight train and the engine at the rear, or doing any of the thousand upside down things they do which are mere matters of taste. But when they bump into scientific principles, the argument is against them. They eat their fruit green, for instance, and die of colic. But they insist that the white man is wrong; that when fruit is ripe it is rotten. But the white man eats ripe fruit and escapes stomach troubles. The white man is right in this, as he is when he makes the sharp end of his ship the front end, and not the blunt end, as do the Chinese.

However, the Chinese maintain that they are

right in everything, and they preserve themselves nationally by this method. This idea runs clear through the people. I have talked with a good many white people over here, and about the last thing any one of them would undertake would be to change a Chinaman. As a matter of fact, the average white man doesn't even make the attempt. If he is to have dealings with the Chinese, he employs a middleman who does understand them. So it happens that one of the first things you run across over here are the expressions "Comprador" and "Number One Boy." A comprador is apparently a Chinese who serves as a general go-between for an employer and other Chinese. A "Number One Boy" is the boss of the servants. All Chinese servants are called "boys"; no one ever thinks for a moment of learning a Chinese' name. He is simply "boy," although he may be sixty and wear whiskers. And, with a few exceptions, it is hopeless to try to get anything through the noggin of one of these "boys." One must call the "Number One Boy," prefer the request to him, and he will pass it on. Now, "preferring the request" is a little strong. I have not yet heard any one prefer a request. If you are eating at an American restaurant, you will probably say to the waitress, "May I

have the sugar?" Over here you take on Napoleon Bonaparte's best manner at Austerlitz and say in tones of mighty command, "Sugar. Go get." This dictatorial, high-and-mighty attitude over here, and you don't want to forget that in a way it is pardonable, is universal. I have a suspicion that if a man spent twenty-five years in China and then returned to America, he would have four or five fist fights a day with servants. All his "mays" and "if you pleases" and "kindlys" would have dropped out of his vocabulary, and there would be something doing. Now, all this bossy language and manner slips off a Chinese as water glides from a duck's back. He doesn't seem to know that you are ordering him. When you say: "Sugar. Go get," and he moves forward three minutes later with a can of pepper, all you have to do is to gnash your teeth and yell: "No. Pepper. Sugar. Go get," and to keep on repeating it until he gets the sugar. Now, this would indicate great docility on the part of the Chinese. But it is probably not that at all. On the contrary, his secret thought is that you are all kinds of an unmitigated idiot, and it is the part of superior wisdom, on his part, to be gentle and kindly with you. For, make no mistake, the Chinese knows his rights and he grabs for them like a hungry

boy after pie at a picnic. If he is "Number One Boy," he would die before he would sweep the floor. He orders another boy to do that, and if you order "Number One Boy" to do anything not on his shift, he will quit. The captain on our boat from Shanghai to Hankow told me that just before he started on his last trip up the river, he told "Number One Boy" to wash six teaspoons which the children had used. He said it wasn't his job, that he wouldn't do it. The captain, who is a double-fisted sort of an individual, took the Chinese by the nape of the neck and led him up to the spoons, but the Chinese wriggled loose and quit the job.

On the way up the river I watched a Chinese take the soundings for the channel. This consists of swinging a three-pound lead into the air and dropping it, and crying out the depth of the channel found. It is a light task at best. But I noticed that this Chinese had at his side another Chinese of lower caste who did the menial work of pulling the lead up out of the water.

The white man undoubtedly would order it otherwise if he could. But the white man can't, and long residence here discourages him in the effort. For attrition against the Chinese saps him, takes away his punch and puts slack in his nervous energy. After a long period in

China all white people grow sallow, and dragged-down and infinitely and unspeakably tired. So the Chinese who say to the ambitious: "Welcome to our city, oh, ye conquerors," may not be so very much wrong. For, while Phillip would be a stranger in Athens, and Caesar lonesome in Rome and Harold a hopeless alien in London, and even George Washington might feel himself a good deal of an intruder in modern America, Confucius could return to Shantung today and find himself completely at home. His kin, if they had mixed during his absence wouldn't show it.

VII

RAIN AND REVOLUTION

TO those of you who are inclined, having read what I have here presented, to disbelieve it, I would like to say that I have exercised every care not to admit anything into the narration which is improbable. And I hope that it will be accepted because it gives a fair view, from one angle, of a political situation in China which is always threatening an explosion with international complications.

Recently a tract in the city of Hankow a half mile square was burned, bombed and looted. About 200 people were killed and burned. In the midst of this conflagration was an American lumber yard, occupying something like an acre. It is, in appearance, an ordinary lumber yard. It escaped absolutely unscathed.

Anyone who will take the trouble to understand this fire may comprehend, without trouble, the danger of the explosion aforesaid. For some time there has been a political society

TRANSPORTATION IN INTERIOR CHINA

THE CARRIER COOLIE

in Hankow known as the Ming party. It wanted office. Its leaders landed. The following didn't. The bunch, for something better to do, grabbed the son of a rich Peking official and held him for $10,000 ransom. Otherwise, also, they got themselves disliked.

Finally this unhappy band hid itself away in the Japanese concession. Now, a word about the concessions. For a mile or so along the river at Hankow are the consular offices of foreign nations, America included. But America rents her building. The other nations own their own buildings and a lot of ground which, in times past, they politely grabbed. Japan has two concessions, an original plot and an extension. These various concessions are not only occupied by consular buildings, but by business blocks, some of them quite large. Each concession has its own police force. The British have a volunteer fire company, and recently the Japanese garrisoned a troop of some six hundred regular soldiers on their ground. Back of these concessions is the Chinese city, part of which was burned.

It should be understood that the inhabitants of these concessions underwent quite a strain when the war broke out in Europe. Germans, British, French and Russians meeting daily in

those times would naturally prove a little deficient in furnishing the ingredients for a first-class cup of joy. But they are all agreed on one proposition—and that is the condemnation of the Japanese. There may be several white men in China who regard the Japanese in a kindly light, but friendly Japanese sentiment doesn't overwhelm you.

Those who do not fancy the Japanese allege that the Japanese harbored the Ming party and insidiously stirred them up to riot for a specific purpose. At nine o'clock in the evening of the riot a newspaper reporter attended a meeting of the Ming party. The crowd carried bombs, lighted torches and a gun for every six men. There were from two hundred to three hundred of them.

Shortly after nine o'clock the Mings set fire to the town back of the concessions and nearest the Japanese section. As the sparks flew and the bombs exploded the mob grew. The rioters attacked the Chinese police station and captured it. Most of the policemen got out of their uniforms and hid out. The Chinese chief of police escaped to the French consulate. The beginning of one first-class revolution was in motion when something happened, and that something was decidedly Chinese. It began to rain.

Now, to Chinese, rain is "bad joss pidgin"; that is, the signs were not right, and the riot and the fire ceased. It didn't rain much, but it halted the game through the power of superstition. Meanwhile the foreigners were calling for the Chinese troops, and were receiving repeated assurances that troops had been sent. But the troops were not in sight, and the foreigners prepared to sell their lives dearly, if it quit raining. And it did quit. Immediately the riot and fire resumed. Looting began. Now, the fire did not begin where it had ended, but a considerable distance away from the Japanese concession. From this moment onward, from what I gathered, the Japanese interest in it waned. If the charges made against the Japanese are true, they wanted the fire near them—a fact which conceals a plot in this story. The rioters, moving away from the Japanese concession, encroached on the French tract. The French authorities, backed with a squad, issued a warning which the rioters disregarded. The order to fire was given, and about a hundred Chinese fell. The Chinese troops came late, being very foxy, as will later appear. At one time, one of the foreign concessions asked aid of the Japanese, and the Japanese sent a troop. A machine gun detachment was landed from an American

gunboat. The thing was well over by two o'clock in the morning. The scene was one of great desolation and misery. In the midst of it, immune, stood that American lumber yard.

What was it all about? If the Japanese started the rioters, why did they get them to begin near the Japanese concession? Why did the Chinese troops hold back? Why should a lumber yard go through a conflagration like this untouched?

Your guess may be all right. I don't know, and I will not be able to say for certain. The international politics of the Orient doesn't admit of anything but guesses, and even when you guess, you are not given the answer. You simply grope in the first place, and in the second place you keep on groping.

Let us take a common guess in Hankow. Firing on a foreign concession is a serious business. Drop a shrapnel shell into a foreign concession and the offended nation indignantly grabs a section of land from China to punish her, and calls it an extension of the original grant. About the last thing a Chinese patriot would think of doing would be to shoot up a foreigner's property. That explains the miracle of the lumber yard. And it also explains the whispered view of a lot of people in Hankow

that the riot was a Japanese scheme to get the Chinese troops onto the scene and have them wallop, through mistake, a few shells into the Japanese concession, and seize some more land. It will also explain how the Chinese generals, foreseeing the game, refused to bring their troops up until the riot had moved away from the Japanese section of the town. There is a missing link in the story: If the Japanese were manipulating this game, why did they let the rioters get out of their part of town? The answer is: The rain. It stopped the growth of the riot at the beginning. And when the rain quit, the rioters had to start all over again, and they moved into fresh and unlooted territory.

If the guess is a correct one, the Japanese were seeking to win by means of an accident, and they lost through another accident instead. I don't say this is true. It is one guess.

Some of you are no doubt inclined to think this story is involved. You are right about that. It is involved. And so is the game the nations are playing over here. I should say that the whole thing is a volcano and that the lid may be blown off with a bang as long as the international rivalry within China obtains. And you would also if you walked into a place of business as I have, and saw a rack of rifles stand-

ing near the front door, or if you could hear the general suppressed roar over the fact that the Japanese have recently erected a wireless apparatus on their concession and are supposed to be grabbing off other people's messages. For, be it known, the wireless has stretched its invisible fingers thus deep in the interior and far from serving as a tie to bind the human brotherhood together, and establish amity, bids fair to break the brotherhood asunder and breed discord.

VIII

WRONGS OF CHINESE WOMEN

THERE is no "woman question" in China. There ought to be. And I wish I could live long enough to see the women of China rise, demand their rights and take payment in full for centuries of cruelty. The thing wouldn't look square without that payment in full. If the men simply said: "All right, here are your rights," it would be a rank cheat. The only thing that would balance the books would be a big, bloody revenge.

It is pretty hard to do this thing justice. Of course, the nice, easy, courteous thing to do is to take the Oriental view, as some writers of books do, and show that the system makes the Chinese woman a very happy, contented being. That sort of talk goes down with the kind of politician who says it is a mistake to educate the negro because it will make him unhappy. Of course, I understand that the view I take, grounded in Occidental culture, is liable to get

too much emphasis on certain features of woman's condition in the East, and yet I contend that my indignation of soul is justified.

Now, the Occidental mind, when it comes to dealing with the relation of the sexes in the East, has a head-on collision with facts, before the caboose is well out of the yards.

For instance, when President Yuan Shih Kai died President Wilson undoubtedly telegraphed Madame Yuan Shi Kai the condolences of Mrs. Wilson and himself. Everybody in China laughed and asked: "Which Madame Yuan Shih Kai?" There were, I am told, eight or ten widows.

I am not going to deal logically with the condition of women in China. I am going merely to make the bald statement that promiscuity by a man or a woman of whatsoever breed is not only unmoral, but immoral, and then spread before you little things I have picked up over here. Maybe I have been "stung" on some of these tales. I don't know. You will have to exercise your own judgment about that.

Generally speaking, the more wives a Chinese has the greater his credit at bank. Concubines cost money. The cost of installation is heavy (a concubine of the first class goes as high as $4,000 gold), and the upkeep is considerable.

Weddings are expensively elaborate. Frequent marriage makes for prestige. The first wife, usually betrothed in infancy, is the boss of the other wives, and she is legally the mother of all the other women's children. Sometimes she is a paragon as such and sometimes she is not. A missionary doctor of Kweichow told me this story: A rich Chinese who was single-minded in his devotion to his spouse, was, with her, greatly concerned because no son was born. They talked it over and determined that he should marry a young woman they knew. He did. To them a son was born. The first wife took over the care of the son and had every solicitude that the boy's own mother could possibly feel for him.

The doctor also told me this tale: One day while he was administering to a convert, the village telegraph operator, who spoke a pidgin English, called and said: "My concubin-o take sick. Want medicine." The convert took the operator to one side and chided him. "You ought to be ashamed," he said, "talking to a Christian about your concubin-o." Then the operator turned to the doctor and said: "Makee one mistake. Want medicine for Number Two wife."

On the main street of Hankow it was pointed out to me that girls with banged hair were un-

married, and those with the hair of the forehead squared pretty well back on the scalp were married. This front hair is pulled out of a bride's head, a hair at a time, and the mother-in-law does the job. "What is the idea?"I asked my informant, a woman.

"It's cruelty, sheer cruelty," she replied; "cruelty that teaches subjection. The bound foot is the same thing. It crushes the spirit as well as the feet. Of course, one of the reasons for its origin was to keep the wife from being stolen, for they kidnap afoot in China, but the basis of the custom is cruelty."

Along this main street in Hankow I saw many girls who did not appear to be over nine or ten years of age who were married and were working at benches. One girl, not over ten, was sitting by the side of her husband, a merchant. He could not have been under sixty.

The boy is the whole thing in China. The more boys the greater the honor of the father. This ambition for a multiplicity of sons results in an over-production of all children, a dissipation of masculine strength and a surplus of girls. I know there are people who will scoff at this idea. But I stand for the idea with both feet, and if I were so minded I could put up an argument for my side that would make the Roose-

velt idea about race suicide look pretty sick.

The large and polygamous family in China is against the vigor of the male, but it is more against the female—girl or woman.

There is a bit of relief from the sombre view in the fact that China is improving. Girl infanticide is decreasing. It is nonsense to say that it has disappeared.

I asked the missionary doctor about this. "The practice has decreased," he said. "There is no doubt about that. But why don't they tear down their girl towers? It would be more reassuring if they did."

"What is a girl tower?" I asked.

"It is a stone turret with a small opening at the top, so small that once an object is dropped into the tower it can not be recovered. They used to drop their surplus girls into these receptacles. The practice is now absolutely prohibited—but they ought to tear these towers down."

Another thing: the custom of crushing the women's feet is going out. It isn't gone by a long shot, but it is passing, and that is something. I counted the women I passed in one street in Hankow, and those with crushed feet numbered two out of every eleven.

The higher class women of China are not often visible. What their estate is I do not

know except as I read about it in books, and there it is described in glowing colors. It may be true enough. I have been dealing with the women and children of the people.

What does the woman of China think of her estate? Probably nothing. Down in her heart, I would like to bet a dollar to a doughnut, she doesn't like promiscuity in her husband. I don't think any normal woman ever did or ever will. If that isn't true, why the human emotion of jealousy? History, ancient and modern, Oriental and Occidental, has never been without it. And it is still in good working order in the breast of our Chinese sister—make no mistake about that.

The Chinese women have a lot to learn, however, on the purely feminine side. It isn't their fault that they haven't learned. They haven't had the chance. Their features are lacking in the charms that intellectuality imparts. Their enforced inactivity has taken away many seductive lines of limb and body. Their greatest care of coiffure or silken gown—and they have all-sufficient vanity to bestow worlds of attention on both—do not get the results such efforts should get. I could go on and say that if the Chinaman only knew it, he would be the winner by her emancipation. But I am not going to do

anything of the kind. The Chinese husband has nothing coming to him—except a long-deferred punishment—which, of course, he will escape.

At the same time I think time will bring the Oriental woman her emancipation. I am dead sure that China can not mix very much of this republican form of government up with her daily life without starting something in the kitchen, and heaven speed the day!

IX

INTO THE BANDIT COUNTRY

WHEN we were about to begin the third stage of our journey into the interior of China we had warnings in plenty. "I advise you not to go," said the consul general at Hankow. Then, having done his official duty, he lit a cigar and said: "I surely would like to take that trip myself."

Everywhere in China white people talk about the trip beyond the gorges. Everybody dreams of the day when he will make the trip, and then shivers at the prospect of doing it. "What!" I have been asked a hundred times, "do you mean to say that you are going beyond the gorges? You're going to take the risk? Well, I envy you."

Of course, that sort of an attitude makes you eager to take the trip. Yet you do demand particulars about perils—and don't get them. As nearly as you can make out, the dangers are two—navigation and bandits. I hope to be able to describe the dangers of navigation later.

This last stretch of the river, from where it comes tumbling down out of the center of Asia to Ichang, is infested with robbers. They have a weakness for holding up boats bound for Chung-King. Their object is money, but they are miserably careless with fire-arms and notoriously poor shots, and accidents do happen. The captain of the Siangtan, which brought us from Hankow to Ichang, said that the boat from Chung-King which arrived before his last trip was held up four times. A major of the United States army, who came down in February, was held up seven times. When he appeared at this end, there was great rejoicing, as his friends understood that he had been killed. It was, however, another white man who met that fate.

Now, I had this thing in mind—twenty years ago if I had wanted to travel across Oklahoma near which I lived, I would have done so, although the air at the time was full of the exploits of Bill Doolin. And while I wouldn't have lost any sleep, it is a cinch that the passenger from New York on the same train would have held his breath while he was crossing Oklahoma. In other words, these bandit perils are always a great deal more terrible when you hear about them from a distance.

Perhaps this feeling of assurance, as arrived at, was weakened a bit by the thought that a Chinese bandit, like everything else in China, might be a different brand from his brothers in other parts of the world.

For nothing in China is the same. Recently a Japanese patent medicine firm decided to open a field in China. It came away up the river and planted a big sign advising Chinese to use So and So's pills for the liver and heart and so forth. The Japanese are nothing if not enterprising, and they are some advertisers. But they are not onto the curves of the Chinese. The minute that sign went up the Chinese got out the story that the Japanese government was engaged in a gigantic conspiracy to get the Chinese to take these pills and kill the whole nation off. There has been no sale for these pills since.

It is so in everything. A few years ago there was a tremendous famine in this district. People by the hundreds of thousands died of starvation. All the nations of the world sent aid. From America came cheese. Many Chinese died of starvation rather than touch it. They will not eat cheese, any more than you would eat kitten.

The chief engineer of the Siangtan told me

about the Chinese method of revenge—which is to kill yourself on the door-step of your enemy; this puts the kibosh on him right—it glues the evil spirit to him and he might better commit suicide himself to get out of the deal, and he frequently does. The chief engineer said that on one of the trips up the boat carried the wife of a Chinese general and six or seven concubines. The concubines fell to nagging the wife, and they had a first-class family row. But the wife won out over the concubines all right by rushing to the rail before them all, casting herself into the river and drowning before their eyes. That put the fixings to the concubines. The boat put out and fished up the body. But the big job on that trip the rest of the way was to quiet those concubines. They weren't sorry, but they were scared. The wife had tied a "haunt" on them, and life wasn't worth living.

The Chinese will not rescue drowning persons in the Yangtse. The idea is that the spirit of the Yangtse is claiming a soul, and interference would cause the spirit great offense. Nice philosophy, that; nice kindly philosophy.

As we shoved our way up the river, I thought a great many times how it would be possible to describe the landscape to folks in America. To tell you there were fertile plains, green and

beautiful, dotted with little white settlments and backed by blue mountains in the distance does not mean much. I have wondered if I should give a list of the things which are absent, if it wouldn't give you a better idea of the country. I'll try. There is, first of all, no smoke from railroad and factory. There are no windmills or silos or haystacks. There are no herds, no roads, no chimneys, no lawns, no fences, no recognizable barns. I have seen chickens, but no coops, sheep but no pastures, pigs but no pens. There are no swinging doors to the houses, and precious few windows—that is, an almost entire absence of glass. I have seen but little leather of any kind, and no rubber. The average town along the Yangtse is either white or without paint at all. There is no artificial color in a Chinese landscape. The temples and the pagodas may have been brilliant once. They are not now. This is a primitive people. They have little, and they are not in the way of getting more. They have, to my mind, the richest land on earth and the most poverty I have ever seen. It is a condition that ought to make robbery a seductive sort of a calling. But notwithstanding, I did not expect to meet any bandits on the upper river, as I had been warned.

X

THE HOME OF A DRAGON PRINCE

I TRACKED the Chinese dragon to his lair, and I had blistered feet to show for it. It came about in this way: There was a ten-day wait in the city of Ichang for a steamer up the Yangtse river, and while there I heard about the home of the dragon, and set out to visit it. The trip is accounted eleven miles, and as a precaution against exhaustion we had chairs go along, although we did not use them much. I tried mine. For safety, I would rather use a Ford any day. There were four men ahold of my chair, the poles of which were about sixteen feet long. Two men were in front of me and two behind. They dogtrot a short distance and the first man yells "ban-go," the chair is balanced on an upright stick and the poles are shifted to a new place on the carriers' shoulders. On a level piece of ground it is a nice swinging ride, and I was approving it when we struck out suddenly on a narrow mountain trail

and as suddenly came upon a sharp turn around a boulder and over a chasm. Just what the rear men did I can't tell; I couldn't afford to look back, but the two front men had a dickens of a time. They all yelled at once and the two front men backed and filled and in some inexplicable way swung out into the air and then swung me out after them. I didn't like it, and I let out a protest myself. It would be an awfully humiliating thing to be killed riding in the most primitive mode of conveyance—a chair. We had to do several break-neck bits, and I preferred, for the most part, to walk.

We traveled up a valley which slashes through the mountains with a small chattering brook at the bottom. This valley is in the interior of China, the trail is never over twenty inches wide, and most of the things I saw were exactly as they have been for four thousand years. Men were ploughing with bullocks; the plow a wooden stick. I saw harrows about three feet square, a boy spread out, face downward, on the implement. Fields of paddy rice, in terraced lakes, reached to the top of the hills, and there was a sort of kafir corn, little patches of poor cotton, sweet potatoes, red peppers and a few pumpkin vines. The average field could not have been over a third of an acre.

The houses were fairly good. We had a close view of them, as the trail we followed went through front yards, over front and back porches, and occasionally straight through a cottage. In a good many instances fire-crackers were touched off, either to overcome our influence or to welcome us—I got both explanations. At very frequent intervals we passed little wayside shrines, coops of stone in which four or five plaster gods stood. The people looked prosperous in a way. We passed many of them on the trail—once a jolly farmer carrying his twin girls, each in a basket, and the two swung to a pole across his shoulders. At another point we came upon a country belle, clad in beautiful blue embroidered trousers, and she stumped ahead of us on her bound feet with great fear. Some of the older men saluted us, but generally there was a retreat by the whole family indoors, and then a cautious and curious issuing forth after we had passed.

As we mounted higher into the hills we saw many blue-jays, with tails ten or twelve inches long and vividly green and red dragon flies and many praying mancas, a sort of Chinese grasshopper. The echoes of the valley were marvelous at places, and at one point we listened to a Chinese girl shaking rice in a sieve fully a mile

away. Farther along we came upon a dog, perched upon a rock, and awaking in the distance a whole world of canine echoes. He seemed possessed and gaunt—evidently industriously barking his life away at foes who did not exist.

Our objective was Lung-Wan-Tung—the cave of the dragon prince; that is, the home of the king of the dragons. It would be difficult to tell where China got this dragon idea. Politically, China is trying to get rid of it. The republic has put it off the flag and postage stamp, but it persists everywhere else, and the people up in this valley believe that the old he-dragon of the whole outfit lives in a subterranean cave up in these mountains. They have so believed for centuries. No one has ever seen him, but that makes no difference.

The mountain-side at the head of the valley is broken off and a great ledge of rocks sticks out over the entrance to the cave. Beneath this ledge, and completely roofed by it, stands a very large and beautiful temple. In the front yard of this temple is a big stone fountain, and into this fountain pours a stream of water from the edge of the ledge two hundred feet above. This water sparkling in the sunshine gives a really beautiful effect.

The priest of the temple gave us a cordial welcome. I didn't get him right at the start, but eventually got onto his curves. I thought he wanted to take my hat. But that wasn't it. He wanted to shake hands. I did shake hands with him, but his finger nails were so long that I had the sensation of feeling around in a bureau drawer full of razors. We passed on through the temple. The gilded gods in double row in front of the altar were on hand, a deep-toned bell which I tried, and also a barrel-shaped drum which I thumped once for luck. There also appeared in this shrine three umbrellas of "ten thousand memories." These are umbrellas hung over with thousands of labels carrying Chinese characters. At some former period several thousand admirers of some priest each contributed a label and presented the whole business to the temple. They were very old, dilapidated and discolored, these umbrellas.

The priest did not accompany us to the cave, immediately back of the altar—why he did not, we could not make out. Boats floated at the edge of the lake, but the water was up to the roof of the cavern, and we could not push back into it. It has never been explored. That keeps the dragon story good.

Now, it is impossible to understand China.

One soon wearies of asking why. The country simply does not parse. If a procession passes along the river bank at night, firing crackers, beating gongs and yelling, you can't find out why, and you quit trying. If a boatload of men at 8 o'clock in the morning come drifting down the current in a row boat, beating gongs and playing pipes, you want to know what it is all about. You won't find out. I am convinced that a lot of these Chinese do things they can't explain themselves. But although your curiosity is likely to callous, China remains the country of constant surprises.

Here I was in an unfrequented valley in the interior of China at an ancient shrine. My host was a holy man—far removed from contact with civilization. Whatever Greece had given to the world, whatever Rome had contributed to life, he remained innocent of. He, his shrine and his parishioners, their faith, their works, their lives and labors and loves were all alike alien to this age as I know it. My coat, my shoes, my hat, even my nose glasses, had been the objects of the closest but most polite scrutiny. I might as well have dropped from Mars or Saturn.

And then the old priest, before we said goodbye, produced from the bottom of a chest a photograph yellow with age—a photograph of

himself taken in his youth. He showed it to me with pride. It was a good likeness and unmistakably my host in his younger days. And in the photograph he was wearing pointed shoes, a sack coat, a standing collar and a derby. Where had he been in his youth? I don't know. But he had come back in his old age to be the guardian of the dragon.

XI

HANDLING THE YANGTSE JUNKS

ALL the big Yangtse river steamers stop at Ichang, for the gorges are beyond, and the gorges stop things. Everything in the way of cargo the steamers bring this far is unloaded, repacked in smaller packages and put on junks for the trip over the rapids.

Here is a junk as she raises anchor for the trip up through the gorges. A man climbs to the top of the sixty-foot mast and ties a delicate little ornament to it, the daintiest things I have seen in China. Simultaneously someone on board turns loose a lot of fire-crackers, and immediately after the gongs are going. It is no use to ask why, but no self-respecting junk ever starts without this racket. After this Fourth of July celebration, the men all lay hold of the ropes (they are made of braided bamboo) and begin a song, and the sail spreads to the breeze. Usually the skipper plants himself well forward and sounds a tin whistle. This is whistling for

the wind. You may think this is Chinese. It is not. Skippers have whistled for the wind since the days of Ulysses. When the junks reach the gorges they are dragged through by the sailors.

Now, what do they carry? Cotton, tobacco, cinnamon bark, ginger, in season tea, silk and a good deal of cotton piece goods and medicine. The Chinese are some medicine takers. About every fourth door in a Chinese city is a medicine shop. The stuff is almost always dry, and it is set out in little dishes. It includes everything on earth and then some—dried skin, powdered scorpions, granulated lizard and all the herbs that grow. Ask a Chinese what some queer looking object is, and if he doesn't know he will answer "medicine." He figures that it is a good guess, and it usually is. The highest-priced medicine in China is the stomach of mosquitoes. It is given for kidney trouble. As a good deal of the medicine is vegetable, it probably does very little harm, and I have met some white men who say that, for ailments like fevers, it is sometimes efficacious.

When a junk arrives at Ichang on its down-river trip it is a great occasion for those on board; that is, for the men. They get to see the town. I have never seen a Chinese woman or

the children get off a junk, so all they get to see is from the river. A junk costs somewhere around $500 gold, and it is usually owned by one family—that is, grandfather, father and son. Their children are born on the junks, and they live and die there. You will see chickens, pigs and dogs aboard; everything, in fact, necessary to keep a household going. The only creatures who enjoy a square deal are the men and the ducks. Both get away from the junks occasionally. Nobody else does.

When the junks arrive, they line up along the shore about eight deep, with an occasional lane left between them. This lane is for the sampans. The sampan is a small row-boat, manned by two oarsmen, usually an old man and a boy. They do all the traffic between boats. The current of the river is very swift, and the handling of these sampans is worth crossing the Pacific to see. The sampan goes down stream like a rocket, and about all the labor necessary is with the rudder. But up-stream is another matter. The up-stream thing is accomplished by a bamboo pole on one end of which is a hook, on the other a sharp point. The sampan itself is about twenty feet long; the bamboo pole about ten. Let us say that a sampan bound up-stream comes to a place where the end of one junk is

forty-five feet away from the end of another junk. It is necessary for the sampan to cross this open space. The sum of the length of the sampan and two poles is forty feet. That leaves five feet to be negotiated in swift water. The man on the rear shoves his pole against one junk and gives the sampan headway across the five feet, and the man on the prow grabs the next junk with his hook and drags the boat up to the junk. Now, it is etiquette to jab and hook other sampans, and the result is one of the most amusing things on earth. One sampan may get a good forward start when plunk! a hook from another sampan will stick into his boat and drag him back. There is but one thing to be done, and that is to throw his hook into anything in front of him. This he usually does, and the next boat has to find something to hold onto. The head boat in a procession like this naturally has a dickens of a time. The whole river traffic seems to be tied up to him and to be dragging him back. But he yells at the whole pack and rushes for something to hook onto, and I have never yet seen him fail to grab hold of something. Occasionally one will see a line of twenty sampans hanging onto a vessel under sail and stealing its power. With any other nation on earth, this continuous appropriation

of power and interference with boats would lead to a riot.

Even as it is, the Chinese quarrel a lot along the river bank. I have seen at least fifty fights, and I had one interpreted. The Chinese do not strike; they shove with open hands. But before they begin pushing, they talk. They are positively the noisiest talkers on earth. They have the worst of tempers, and they soon lose all control of themselves. After they have argued for a while, one of the combatants shoves the other, and the man who has been pushed simply throws a fit. He jumps up and down and screams. It must be that touching is equivalent to a blow. Then the man who has pushed walks away, apparently satisfied. At once the man who was throwing a fit follows the other up and says something to him and retreats, and the pusher runs back at the pushee, and the air is eloquent of murder. But I soon learned to quit holding my breath. It only meant a renewal of the argument. There is charge and answer—a regular debate, and the crowd, which forms a good old civilized circle, laughs at the shots given. The pusher calls the pushee's father a cock-roach, and the pushee says the pusher's father was a scorpion. Then the pusher charges that the pushee's great-

grandfather was a cross-eyed tarantula—and so on, exhausting the whole insect world (they do not bring in the dog). Finally the man who first denounces the other's eighteenth ancestor wins. But he mustn't jump any in between. He must come up to it regularly and in order. And when the winner does it, he puts his nose up in the air, pulls up his skirts and stalks away triumphantly—a real Yellow Hope.

XII

A STATION WITHOUT A RAILROAD

ICHANG is a city of some fifty thousand souls, and now that they have moved some of the graveyard, it is on a regular, rip-snorting boom. It will be a cracker-jack place if they ever get any cars on their railroad. Three big things have happened here in the last few years that have stirred the community to its depths.

The first thing was this: For a couple of thousand years or so, Ichang failed to land a scholarship of the first degree. Time after time it sent students to Peking to take the examination, but the bunch always came trapsing home with second, third and tenth degree scholarships, and in the course of a century or two the town got all fussed up about it. Eventually the people appealed to the priest and after twenty or thirty years' study the priest hit upon the nigger in the wood-pile. Right across the river from Ichang is a pointed hill called the "Pyramid."

The priest said that the evil influence of this hill was certainly putting the kibosh on the place. The hill is too big to be cut down, so the priest suggested that the community select another hill on this side of the river and build a temple on it and thus overcome the devilish voodoo of the Pyramid. It worked, all right. The very next examination Ichang landed a first scholarship, and things from that moment began moving. And this led to the second factor in Ichang's prosperity.

The second thing was road-building. As Ichang prospered after putting a quietus on the Pyramid, revenues accumulated and it became necessary to spend them. Somebody thought of roads—chiefly because there is no place for roads and no traffic for them. It took like wild-fire—this road idea, and like wild-fire it spread. For it was perfectly plain that if any roads were to be built, the graveyard must be moved, and it was equally plain that if the graveyard was moved that the plain, common people would pull some coin out of the deal. This requires explanation. A Chinaman's relation to his dead is the biggest thing in life. Ordinarily the dead are not immediately buried. They are stuck around until the survivor can get enough money together to pull off a first-class funeral. It

doesn't make much difference where the late lamented are stuck, either. There is one corpse on a scow in this river port that moves out to the ships with every load of cargo, and the captain of this boat tells me that this coffin has been on this particular scow now for over a year. When the funeral is finally pulled off, a big round mound, four feet high, eight feet in diameter, is built over the coffin and the place is considered inviolate. It must not be disturbed, and no shadow must fall across it. Now, people in Ichang have been dying with great regularity for a long time, and the way the graveyard spread in the course of centuries was a caution. It elbowed up against the city's walls and then flooded out over hill and dale. Here, then, was a proposal to get rid of a part of it, for the purpose of putting in some rock roads. How could this be done in face of the ancient Chinese prejudice against disturbing the dead? Well, they could be moved, and the families of the deceased could be recompensed for the expenses of the removal. It was a clever idea of the politicians, and it had everybody excited. About seventy-five cents silver was allowed for every grave removed. The whole population got busy locating its ancestors. There were hot disputes over many of the mounds, and there were

some cases where one skeleton was palmed off twice on the authorities. However, on the whole it worked out fine. Everybody got his money, and the market quotations on ancestors will probably never rule as strong in China again. Coolies dug up the dead, and in instances where corpses were ornamented with rich and ancient jewelry, had first-class scratching matches over the booty. The dead were all dumped together somewhere—just where I have found no one willing to testify. At all events, a township was cleared off and the authorities started in to build the roads. A good many white men have been out to see these roads, and they usually come back with the feeling in their heads that a boy has after he has finished his first lesson in geometry. I tried some of the roads. They don't lead anywhere, except that one I tried came back eventually and landed me where I started. I felt really grateful about that. It seemed reasonable. This road construction has given a lot of poor people work, and is really a meritorious public work. You will realize what I mean when I tell you that I saw many a woman nursing a baby on one arm and pounding rock with the other, and glad of the chance. The roads are about sixty feet wide, and a sort of a Belgian block, and well curbed.

Now, this road activity has done a lot for the town, and it supplements in a way the railroad, which is the third factor in the new era in the history of Ichang. The railroad station is a big two-story building—one of the best in China—and the round house is a wonder. The station has never seen a passenger, or the round house a locomotive, for the railroad isn't built yet. Some years ago a Chinese company was formed and started in to build a line up to Chung-King, four hundred miles away. Fifteen miles out of town they ran up against a mountain and couldn't get over and had to quit. The national government concluded to take over the property and the stockholders howled, and I have been told that it was these same stockholders who called President Yuan Shih Kai's hand when he tried to switch himself into an emperor. At any rate, the government did not get the railroad. What happened was this: You remember that five big nations, America included, agreed to make China a loan. This was during one American President's administration. Our Wall street crowd got in, and as part of their concession were given the right to construct this line from Ichang to Chung-King, which is in Szechuan, the richest State in China. The railroad will be a gold mine. American engineers got over the

mountain difficulty by planning a three-mile tunnel through the hill, at an estimated cost of $1,000,000. Then bang! Another American came in as President, and it is said refused to back the American financiers in their railroad loan deal with China, and the whole thing fell through.

All this delay doesn't disturb the Chinaman. True, he hasn't a railroad. But look at that station, and behold that beautiful roundhouse. The Chinese population go and walk around it and admire it and exclaim among themselves over what a truly wonderful thing a railroad is, and how it develops the country. They don't exactly figure out what the station and round house are for, but a little thing like that doesn't disturb the citizens of Ichang. And if somebody should come along and announce that a locomotive was building and would be sent to occupy the round house in 2216 A. D., they wouldn't bat an eye.

But the town is booming all right on the prospects. The only thing which really surprises me is that all these signs of prosperity don't kill the place deader than a door-nail—it would be so beautifully contrary and so typically Chinese if they did.

For things are certainly upside down in this

town. Every night I heard the watchman go through the streets whacking a gong. I dug out of the chief of police what the idea is. It was to notify the thieves that someone was on guard and they might better beware.

Every day there passed us a blind beggar carrying a little tinkly bell. I gave him a penny one day, and he turned upon me a face that was as impressive as a graven image. Was he thankful? Not on your life. It was my place to be thankful. Why? Because the obligation was on me to be thankful to him for giving me the opportunity to be generous. Do you get that?

There was a gambling resort across the way, and every night the gang had a noisy game which kept me awake. The game is this: A Chinaman throws his hand into the air with a certain number of fingers showing—two—three—four. Simultaneously—and it must be simultaneously—the gang yells out its guess—two—three—four. The fellow who misses the guess—that is, yells two when three fingers are shown—is forced to take a drink. In any other country on earth the loser has to set up the drinks. Here in Ichang the winners make the loser drink.

I suppose the law of contraries is limitless. I

stopped to watch some Chinese children playing hop-scotch in the street. I hadn't seen a game for thirty years, but I remembered the figure we used to scratch on the ground, or chalk on the sidewalk, and I wasn't surprised to find that the Chinese figure was the same, except that they had it turned upside down.

No wonder Ichang built the round house first.

XIII

THE YANGTSE GORGES

I TRAVELED twelve thousand miles to see the most tremendous piece of natural scenery in the world. If it had proved a lemon, it would take more fortitude than I have to own up to it. But as the scenery proved better than the advertisement, I feel that a lot of people will say that I am over-stating in order to justify the journey.

I am not going to over-state. I think I can under-state and make my trip seem worthwhile. Indeed, I hope I can induce some of my readers to make the trip, and some of you will, because once they get a railroad up into this country, the world will flock here to fill itself with awe over the gorges of the Yangtse.

The Yangtse stretches practically across China. For one hundred and twenty-five miles it bores through a mountain range which lies across its path about half way down to the sea. On this stretch the river is bordered by

JUNKS SAILING IN THE BACK CURRENT

THE TRACKERS OF THE YANGTSE

high mountains all the way, and at eight different places in this stretch the mountains crowd the river into a mere thread. It is all gorge, although there are eight places of surpassing interest.

The eight gorges have the following names. Curiously, the mountain range in which they are located is, Chinese fashion, un-named:

1. Yellow Cat.
2. Lampshine.
3. Ox Liver and Horse Lungs.
4. Mitan.
5. Iron Coffin.
6. Witches' Mountain.
7. Bellows Gorge.
8. Gorge of the Eight Cliffs.

This uncovered tunnel cuts the province of Szechuan off from the rest of China. Szechuan is about twice as big as Kansas, and its population nearly that of the whole of the United States. For four thousand years only about one man out of every 500,000 born in this province has ever gotten out of it. It is the richest State in China, and is absolutely isolated from the rest of the world. These gorges do it.

The Yellow Cat and Lampshine gorges are towering hills of limestone and sandstone, something like the Columbia Dalles in Oregon, and

not quite as imposing. The river narrows to six hundred feet at Ox Liver gorge, and the water deepens at places to three hundred and fifty feet. A peculiar stalactite formation sticks out on the face of the sheer cliff and, overhanging the river, gives the place its name. The fourth gorge, Mitan, is a very short one—four miles —and the mountains rise to a height of 3,500 feet. Between this gorge and the next are the Stone Gates, two shelf rocks, which run out into the river and leave only a little passage way for traffic. This gate passed, the world is left outside. The next gorge is the Iron Coffin. The approach to this shows two box-like ledges of calcareous rock, discolored by water. The Witches' Mountain gorge is a very long affair—twenty-four miles. The sun is shut out and the defile is full of floating mists, which touch the whole scene with an air of gloom, and this is intensified by the appearance on all sides of yawning caves, high up and low down. This is followed shortly by the Bellows gorge, by far the most tremendous of the lot, and probably the most awe-inspiring piece of work that nature has turned out. The mountains pile in upon the river and cramp it down to a span. The cliffs rise sheer on either side, the highest going to 5,000 feet. Great rifts in the face of

the rock open black depths, and dark mouths of caverns show on both sides. Photography is out of the question for an amateur. Almost instantly, the pall of the thing descends upon your soul. In the dark sides of the gloomy walls, a cleft is suddenly revealed four hundred feet above and in it two clay pots. The place is inaccessible, and the pots were fashioned by human hands. How did they get there? No one knows. They have been there for centuries, beyond the record of history. The legend is that the devil put them there. I asked the captain about it, and he said that the river must have risen that high once upon a time. Yet he confessed that that explanation didn't seem reasonable. Can it be that the Chinese, the inventors of gun powder, the printing press and so many other things, once had a flying machine and forgot it? It might be. And whether that be true or not, I can foresee a day when a Chinaman in an Occidental aeroplane will hook those pots down, just to spite the devil.

Out through the deepening shadows of the gorge in the distance looms on a mountain crest a great white pagoda, and beyond it, plastered like a painted toy against the side of a beetling hill, a yellow temple, and below it a city, its crenelated wall reaching from the water's edge

far up the hill-slope and making the city look like shot that has fallen into one end of a bag, for the wall encloses not only the city, but farms beside. Above this humps a high-arched bridge at the foot of a cataract. It makes a pretty picture seen from out the overtowering crags and framed in the black edges which form the mouth of the gorge. Here the rugged cinder of one of nature's hot passions grown cold, and there the ordered picture of man's handicraft. Then of a sudden, as if nature had felt the challenge, the tips of the cliffs of the gorge burst into living flames of purple and red. The sinking sun has set them afire with a thousand dancing prisms of liquid light. The deepening shadows of the gorge are shot through and through with films of gold inlaid in violet. And as the reds and purples fade and faint, and at last beat out, as a beautiful butterfly dies, in the golden glory of a waning day, nature, as usual, comes out winner.

XIV

MEN'S BATTLE WITH A RIVER

EVERY boy who was fortunate enough to be reared on the banks of a swift-running river, has a normal curiosity about and a rather intimate knowledge of the mysteries of moving water. The gentlest element on earth when left alone is water. Even the tiniest flame will burn. A zephyr can keep you from unfolding a newspaper. But for real docility, water, in a bucket, is a perfect picture of peace. But start water down hill and it wakes up. And slap it alongside the jaw, trip it up, pound it over the head and kick it from behind, and this self-same, calf-eyed, purring water can go crazier than anything on this mundane sphere.

I have seen a good many delirious actions by water in my time, but I never saw anything quite so violently insane as the Upper Yangtse.

As the Yangtse comes down out of the snows of the world's roof and cuts across Szechuan, it

jumps from rock to rock in a joyous, light-hearted way, at peace with the world, and by the time it reaches Chung-King it has become a big, dignified river with a strut. Its bed is wide and deep, and it moves along with the easy grace of a man accepting a renomination for office. But below this city things begin to happen to the river. The mountains sneak up on it and squeeze it. Even that wouldn't be so bad if the river kept straight, but the mountains twist it into right angles, and the water begins to snort. Still it could keep its head, if that were all. It isn't. Rocks jam out into it from the sides and boulders jab it up from underneath. The Yangtse stands a good deal of this and keeps steady for a while, but when it has been basted and blasted and beaten sidewise about five or six hundred times, it simply goes off on the wildest, eerie-eyed, fire-breathing shindig that it is possible for anybody outside an insane asylum to imagine.

Between Chung-King and Ichang, down the river four hundred miles, I quit counting the rapids—they were too numerous, but I watched with renewed interest the skill of the junkmen in handling the current—in this stretch—the most difficult navigation in the world.

It takes a junk about thirty days to travel

from Ichang to Chung-King. At places, if four miles is made in twelve hours, it is considered great luck. There is only one thing in favour of the junk, usually the wind is blowing up the gorges—the Chinese say this is a gift of the gods. The sail helps a little.

To my eye the water seemed to have five actions. First, the swirl, which makes the river for four hundred miles look as if it were covered with vaccination marks; second, the straight rush down a slope; third, the whirlpool, and some are enormous and deep; fourth, the eddy, which carries the water at the banks up-stream, and fifth, the undertow, which is powerful. Frequently all five of these movements are in operation simultaneously. No light craft could live in it, and only one steamer succeeds in reaching Chung-King under its own power. The alternative is to drag the craft up, and that is what the junkmen do and have been doing for four thousand years. The men who do the dragging are called trackers. Cut into the mountain walls are trails, mostly stone stairs, up and down interminably. The trackers line up along this track, take hold of a bamboo rope and haul away. It sounds simple. And it isn't. It is a long, continuous dead pull, when the river is straight, and it is a back-breaking performance

whenever a rapid is encountered, and when a turn in the river and a rapids are both present, one sees one of the most interesting spectacles of the whole Orient.

I watched a junk round a point called Ye Tan, and I want, if I may, to tell you about it. A big, rocky point sticks out into the river. On this point is the only mechanical device I saw on the whole river trip—two wooden rollers set in a frame. The rope runs over this and is thus saved from being torn. The Chinaman who owns it charges four cash a junk for its use—less than half a cent. On the lower side of the Ye Tan Rapids, a great fleet of junks had gathered, waiting their turns. Finally the one with the right of way was swung out. The man at the rudder stood ready; twenty men had hold of the forward sweep, the telegraph pole which sticks out in front to steady the boat and two boys stood by the sail. Out in front ran a bamboo rope, and at the other end of it on the bank, were one hundred naked men with smaller ropes attached to this main line and fastened around their chests. All was ready. Suddenly there sounded above the crash and roar of the water, the roll of a tattoo, rapid and incessant. It was made by a small boy at the foot of the mast. He was beating a skin stretched across a

big pot. This tattoo can be heard above all other noises, and is a signal that all is well. As the drum began to rattle the trackers bent to the task and started their song —a mournful chant that echoed through the chasms in endless repetition. The junk swung out in the rapids. The river clutched her, shook her, dragged her back and down. The long bamboo rope vibrated like a fiddle string. The men were screaming their song now. They moved forward a foot, two, three, four. The junk shivered under the twist of the water; the drum beat sounded louder. It was a magnificent battle between the mad river and the frenzied trackers. The river was winning. The steps of the trackers grew shorter. They made a foot now; six inches only that time, an inch the next. The boss was at their side, rushing wildly back and forth, yelling like mad and brandishing his whip. The junk swung full into the current. She shook like a living thing struck in a vital spot. Bang! The river was winning. The boat stopped and careened in the roaring rapids. Down, one after another, went the trackers. Now the whole hundred were on all fours— every mother's son of them, like big dogs. Their chant was desperate now, a screaming frenzied chorus of rage and defiance. Still the drum

sounded. Up and down the line of prostrate, sweating men, the sinews of their bodies swelling like whip-cords, tore the boss, brandishing his whip and striking now right, now left. The lead man was up. He had gotten his hands off the earth and was getting back to upright again, inch by inch. Then the next coolie to him lifted a hand from the ground, then two, and worked back to the attitude of a man again; and so on, one by one the hundred trackers gained their feet once more. They felt the forward move of the long line, the quivering junk straightened, started, moved forward, first an inch, then two and the Yangtse had lost.

XV

A CASE OF HUMAN NATURE

IF you want strange experiences, the Upper Yangtse is the place for you. Above the gorges, on the other side of the world, life isn't merely a succession of days dovetailing nicely into one another. Not by a long shot. And for that reason a problem in the interior of China becomes a problem. When we reached the city of Wanhsien there came out to meet us a young American representative of an American corporation, a blonde young man with a jovial, cordial way about him that made you his friend before he shook your hand. Now this young American appears for the moment the most popular man in China. Wanhsien is the center of the bandit district and they have been kicking up dust all summer. Twice the young American argued the bandits out of the idea of looting the city, and everybody in town knows it and bobs, like Punch in the show, when he passes. Well, two weeks ago the leading citizens

of Wanhsien foregathered and decided to give their deliverer something. And as the young man got the rumor, the decision was to present him with a wife. The prominent citizens, noting he wasn't married, determined among themselves that this would be a fine gift. At least, so he heard. And he went up in the air, naturally. He wasn't looking for any gift and least of all for a Chinese wife. But how to refuse a gift—that was the question. Here was all this popularity—and if he refused the wife—well—puff—out would go all this popularity like an explosion of gun-cotton. He must not give offense. And while he was debating the thing—up came the delegation of prominent citizens and presented him, not with one, but with two wives. They have the story up and down the whole river, and they have said so much about it that he wants to fight when it is mentioned. So I didn't say anything about it when I met him, but from a friend on the boat I learned that he immediately put the two donations into a school and has given them their freedom. But that doesn't satisfy me on one point—what kind of a story did the young man put up to the prominent citizens to satisfy them? There is probably only one man on earth who speaks English who is in the know on that

—and that is the young man himself. And I don't blame him for not telling. He sidestepped the wives and he kept his popularity, for every time he leaves town the whole population turns out and fires crackers, and when he returns the people repeat it.

I don't know whether I have given the impression that the interior of China is another world to such an extent that you will think that human nature isn't human nature. For it is. Our boat passed two towns side by side. Don't dodge at the names. One was Fung tu Chang and the other Fung tu. For short, we will call one Fung; the other Chang. Chang is an old, black, dilapidated down-at-the-heel city. Fung is a spick and span, up-and-coming metropolis. The temples of Chang are tumbled-down; the temples at Fung are shining jewels of liquid light. There is no wall around Chang—Fung is surrounded by as fine a piece of white limestone masonry as you will see in a day's travel. Chang is packed and crammed and jammed with people. Fung, the beautiful, hasn't a single inhabitant. Chang, the ugly, is a bedlam of noisy activities. Fung is so quiet that the chance dog who gets into it is afraid to bark. Well, what has human nature to do with all this? Just this. In 1870 a great flood swept down the river and

wiped Chang out. It literally obliterated it. Now the chief magistrate in those days in this locality was a wily old politician named Ma. He owned a farm in the second bottom next to the town. Here was a chance to turn a pretty penny and he proposed that the town move over on his real estate. The population of Chang didn't move. It began to rebuild the town on the flooded site. Ma was a fighter right and he built his town—Fung—anyhow. He constructed a splendid wall, he built beautiful temples, handsome residences, tempting stores; he hired people to come and live in his town. But the real people of Chang passed him and his town up. They didn't like it. No one ever discovered just exactly why, until I came along and gave the answer. It was human nature.

Not very far below this live and dead city I had a view of the official residence of the devil. This is Tsien tse Shan, a high hill, which is probably the best known mountain in China. The Chinese religion has a sort of a purgatory scheme in it. Everybody has to have a preliminary dose of Hades after he dies. So when a Chinaman passes in his checks, the officiating priest writes a letter to the superior of Hell announcing the name of the new-comer and putting in a few words of recommendation and a

suggestion that the stranger be shown any little courtesies possible, such as lowering the boiling oil a few degrees Fahrenheit, or giving him an extra drop of water between broils. The priest then sends the letter to this hill by burning it. The smoke from the letter and the spirit of the dead man are supposed to reach the place at the same time. There are temples here and carvings showing devils punching sinners up with red-hot pitchforks. The place, of course, is literally chockful of ghosts, and no Chinaman will approach it at night. Not so very far away are two big stone statues of Mr. and Mrs. Han. They were simply honest merchants, so honest that these statues were given in testimony of them.

Along the Upper Yangtse there is something like this every few minutes, and the country is alive with bandits. They did not trouble us, just as I suspected. The captain of our boat, the Shu-Hun, told me that there were plenty of bandits all right, but ordinarily they didn't monkey with the Shu-Hun.

As a matter of fact nothing monkeys with the Shu-Hun. She is the only thing in this part of the world that is Chinese that laughs at the Upper Yangtse and its terrors. Everything else in the steamboat line that braves the rapids in

the gorges has to be hauled up part of the way. The Shu-Hun, with 2,000-horse power and a superstructure light as tissue paper, and a bottom as flat as a pie-plate, makes the trip without assistance. A German steamer tried it, hit a rock, and ten minues later there wasn't as much as a toothpick left of her. Recently the British tried a new steamer, the Hua Li, on the Upper river. About the third rapid, she blew out a cylinder head, bent a piston, twisted an eccentric and had the time of her life getting out with her hide whole. I don't know what virtue is in the Shu-Hun, but I think it consists of her captain, a Mr. Brandt. During the trying four days of the trip (the boat is tied up to the cliffs at night) Brandt was as busy as a man acknowledging money from home. He dashed from captain's bridge and pilot to engine room and back again. And he kept his eye on the river, the most treacherous body of water in the world. And he brought us through whole, as he does all his passengers from April to October, the half of the year the Upper Yangtse is navigable.

XVI

THE HOPE OF DEMOCRACY

I TOOK part in a Chinese Fourth of July at Chung-King, and my mind naturally turned to my own country and the prodigious problems before it. Every time I looked at China's job in government and felt a flood of hopelessness overwhelming me, I took a look at my own country and remembered that we have some jobs at home—and when it comes to some of them—equalizing the rights of special interests and the individual, for instance—the prospect of a successful solution is not blindingly bright. It will not be solved by increased poverty, extreme partisanship or the cultivation of caste.

A long pink slip of paper came to me. It proved to be an invitation from Mr. Chen, a high Chinese official, to a reception in celebration of the proclamation of the republic five years previously at Nanking. This event took place on the fifteenth day of the ninth moon, the Chinese calendar being catawampus with ours. The re-

ception lasted from eleven in the morning until one o'clock. The guest of honor was General Tai, who helped set up the republic and who insurged when later the President Yuan Shih Kai tried to turn it into a monarchy.

I had a great time getting to the reception. In the first place, the streets are not as wide as a city sidewalk in the United States, and they are always crowded. Besides, a lot of the people get out in the streets to work—mending shoes, pumping sewing machines, working leather and so forth. Today they had a lot of flags over the streets leading to Mr. Chen's house, and this had brought a crowd of sightseers. There was no room for them, of course, and they were soon packed in. Now the chair coolies who were carrying me knew they were on an important mission, and they proceeded to rush that crowd. The outrunner shoved men and women aside roughly, the bottom of my chair scraped the heads of children in the street and everybody yelled in Chinese something equivalent to, "Hold your horses, the elephant is coming!" My coolies could have knocked down most of the population and nobody would have said a word. They were of higher caste than most of the onlookers and, in China, that settles it. China has caste; has had it for four

thousand years, and it just naturally persists.

When I reached the outside court of the Chen house, we worked our way through a herd of saddled ponies which had brought guests. I gave my card to a Chinaman who looked like the man who wanted it, and he preceded me into the house, holding my small calling card above his head. Mr. Chen, attired in a very long Prince Albert coat, greeted me and introduced me to a line of waiting gentlemen, General Chan, in rather modest uniform, a judge of the supreme court, in Chinese dress, the head of the Chinese Red Cross hospital, a doctor in a Prince Albert, the president of the Chamber of commerce, in Chinese dress, and so on, about half the crowd being in Occidental dress. All of them bobbed, that is, did not bow. Presently the consuls began to arrive—very much gold-laced, and the officers from the American gun-boat, likewise in regalia. The Japanese consul had on more gold lace than anybody else. When about a hundred guests had arrived, and they were a long time doing it, some one announced that lunch was ready and in the language of the society page, we "repaired to the dining room."

Now during all this ceremonial I had been looking around for the Chinese republic. I think I found it. It was embodied in Mr. Gurnier's

Number One Boy. Mr. Gurnier is commissioner of customs here. That needs explanation. China borrowed money and pledged part of her revenue for payment. To be sure they get it, the Occidental nations have men here who collect it. Mr. Gurnier comes from France. At his home, he told me his Number One Boy had been borrowed by Mr. Chen to superintend the reception, and Madame Gurnier said that he was very proud because of this. He was a bandy-legged Chinese boy, about twenty, with a good head on him. He was Old Business through and through. He didn't talk much, but he made things fly. He had all those servants at Mr. Chen's moving like clock-work, and he kept them at it. They looked on him with wonder, and so did I. Of course, I knew that he was merely Number One Boy, and not much in China's four thousand years' incrustation of caste, and I knew, moreover, that he had never given a thought to the political aspects of caste in his life, but just the same I saw the Chinese republic in him, because if a Number One Boy could handle a reception like that, there is coming out of China's four hundred millions, some day, a Number One in the president's chair who will order things in this vast country with precision, decision, vision and success. It will not

result in a republic such as ours. In this dawning day of democracies, there will be republics and republics—one kind for Europe, another for Anglo-Saxon America, another for Latin America and still another for Asia. But all of them will have the germ of Washington's and Hamilton's and Jefferson's and Lincoln's idea—which is, you cannot get away from it, that the evolution of a republic is to democracy, the evolution of democracy to the rule of majorities, through spiritual and mental enlightenment, to the rule of the voice of God.

In the dining room we found two long tables, parallel. At the head of one stood Mr. Chen, the host; at the head of the other the guest of honor, General Tai. The latter was appareled in a tuxedo and a pleated white shirt and patent leather pumps. Evidently he was no public speaker at all, for the first man to open his mouth was the interpreter, a bright-eyed youth in Chinese dress. This interpreter evidently had had a private conversation with General Tai, for he said that the general wished to say that he was much honored and that he was glad to meet them all. Next Mr. Chen, from his place, made a fluent response, extremely brief. The same interpreter therefore translated into English what Mr. Chen had said. Its chief point was that

the Chinese republic hoped to maintain relations of amity with the nations across the seas. After he had concluded, the American consul read a speech in Chinese, which was not interpreted, but which we understood to be felicitations to the Chinese republic, and a wish for long life to its president. None of the responses were applauded.

After this the luncheon was served. In this part of the world it is invariably called tiffin. The table decorations consisted of long borders of colored daisies, the center of the board bearing occasional designs in Chinese characters, formed of rice, colored green. From the ceiling hung multitudinous flags—a good many of them apparently fanciful—as I judged from one—a blue flag with a horse in the field. About the only flags I identified for sure were the Chinese and the Star-Spangled Banner. The food consisted of sliced chicken and beef, small sweet cakes and several large pink affairs, built in stories, like wedding cakes. Sweet wine was the beverage. There was much conversation throughout the meal, and a little jollity—but not much. General Tai shook hands with the host early and departed and we all followed.

As we passed out of the big courtyard, through the herds of stamping stallion ponies

and the tangle of long-horn chairs, into the midst of the ragged, half-naked, dirty, gaping multitude outside the gate, I caught, over my shoulder, a glimpse of Number One Boy, busy as a bee, overseeing the dispatch of the guests.

And on my way home I bought a bushel basket of fire-crackers for 1600 cash (one-half dollar) and when I reached home I fired 'em all in one lot, for hope of a universal democracy.

XVII

SAVING A CHINESE CITY

I NEVER went anywhere in my life that I didn't run across somebody from home. So, sure enough, out here in Szechuan—but that isn't the way to stage this episode. Let me try it another way. I run the curtain up on two scenes:

Scene I. A Methodist church in an American town twenty odd years ago. The pastor conducting a smashing revival and stirring things up with both ends of a long pole. Among his converts, a slender young fellow, a newspaper reporter.

Scene II. A beleaguered Chinese city, its gates closed, its population cowering in clouds of battle-smoke. Across a river an advancing army, firing as it marches. Crossing that river a middle-aged man carrying a strange flag, stopping the army therewith and saving the city.

Ray Torrey has been out here as a missionary ten years. His post is Tzechow. Torrey has a

JUNKS WAITING AT THE TCHING TAN RAPIDS

A JUNK IN THE RAPIDS

barrel of horse-sense and the folks at Tzechow soon came to have great confidence in him.

You will remember that China's early president, Yuan Shih Kai, threw out an intimation that he would like to help China out by becoming its emperor. He also bounced all governers who weren't in sympathy with this view. The cradle of Chinese liberty is out here in the West. and its particular guardian is the state of Yunnan. The Yunnan men are democratic and they are not foolers, and they called Yuan's hand and called it hard. They rushed an army up into Szechuan to seize its cities and valuable salt mines. Keep in mind that this army was marching northward towards the city of Tzechow. It is necessary to keep this in mind, because the story now grows complicated. When Yuan showed his monarchial symptoms, the governor of Szechuan "stayed with the gang," but when Yuan Shih Kai's Peking army was shipped up the river, fifty thousand strong, the governor fluctuated. Part of the governor's army held the city of Tzechow, where Torrey was. The Yunnan crowd was after this army, and it was marching on to the town to capture it. Rumors of its approach preceded it. A Chinese priest who was attached to a French mission proposed that he take the French flag

and Torrey take the American flag and both go across the river and see if they couldn't arrange terms and save the city from the devastation of a battle.

The Chinese magistrate and the Chinese general in Tzechow were agreeable to this. But Torrey said:

"No. You have no right to use the French flag to stop a battle and I have no right to use the American flag. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll make a flag—a church flag.

Now the Chinese priest didn't like the idea and he quit and Torrey conducted the proceedings alone.

At nine o'clock on the morning after, the soldiers in Tzechow opened up a big cannon on the Yunnan men across the river. It was a big cannon, and it roared something awful. Everybody hid away, for the Yunnan men began to pepper the town with rifle-fire.

With this opening shot began the busiest day of Torrey's life. If he was to do anything, that cannon must be stopped. It wasn't hitting anything—it was simply making noise—but as long as it kept up the Yunnan men would fire back and nobody could cross the river.

So Torrey said: "That cannon has got to be stopped. As long as it is whanging away, I

am absolutely powerless to do anything at all."

The general said: "We can't stop the cannon. The minute we stop the cannon, the other side will think we are helpless, and all will be lost."

So the cannon kept roaring away, its solid shot tearing things up on the other side. After an hour and a half of this, the Yunnan men lost patience and they unlimbered a cannon of their own and let fly at the town. That began to sober things, and finally at eleven o'clock, the general agreed to Torrey to cut the cannon out. Then the Yunnan men quit and Torrey was ready for action. He had been getting ready. He had been inventing and building a flag. Torrey made the flag big. Then he put at each end of it a big red cross. Then in the field he painted three Chinese characters—two blue and one green—"you could see 'em a mile," says Torrey. The Chinese characters read: "The Church of the Gospels."

With this flag stuck in the prow of a rowboat, Torrey moved across the river, with the whole Yunnan army spelling out his flag. When he reached the other side, he sent word to the general that he would like to treat. So the general sent a representative who stood up straight, and without any ifs and buts about it, said: "We don't want to hurt anybody. But we do

want the republic. We won't have anything else. We are fighting for our country. That is our one object. We don't want to kill people; on the contrary we are fighting for the people. If the other side will move out, we will move in and nobody will be hurt, and nothing destroyed."

So Torrey, who liked the manner of this patriot very much, said he would take the proposition to the other side. He did. The other side wanted to get away, but it feared treachery. "If I try to move this army out," said the general, "the other side will rush in and there will be an awful fight."

Thereupon Torrey proposed that the general agree, first to open all the gates of the city the next morning at six, and, second, to have his army by nine o'clock ten miles away from town.

"I agree," said the general.

And then Torrey showed his newspaper training, all right. He said: "Put it in writing."

And the general did put it in writing and Torrey pocketed the document. So armed, Torrey traveled back across the river and submitted the agreement to the Yunnan general.

Now everything takes time in China. This had taken time. It was two o'clock in the afternoon when Torrey got the first agreement out of the Yunnan general. It was midnight before

he got the written document from the Tzechow general. He had taken the precaution to tell the Yunnan general that it would be late before he returned, and not to grow uneasy. Therefore, it was early in the morning when Torrey returned to Tzechow and sat down to wait. The Chinese urged him to go to bed. The Chinese go to bed in a crisis. Torrey didn't. He wanted that thing signed, sealed and delivered before dawn. And it came back O. K. at two o'clock. It had been a long day's work, but it had saved the city. Torrey wasn't taking any chances. He jumped up at five o'clock and hustled around to see if the gates had been opened. They were, all of them. Some of them hadn't been opened, apparently, for centuries. And the army was moving out. But Torrey's work wasn't over. The Chinese Red Cross chief came to him and said:

"There are thirty-seven wounded men in the hospital. They are too badly hurt to be moved. The Yunnan men will kill them unless you can save them."

Post-haste Torrey hustled over to the Yunnan general and said:

"General, the other matter is now arranged, and I have a personal favor to ask of you."

"I will do anything within reason," said the

general. "State it."

Torrey explained about the wounded men.

"It is all right," said the general. "They will not be touched."

And they were not.

The people of Tzechow make much over Torrey, and they are preparing some memorials for him.

But that day Torrey wasn't thinking of memorials. He took off his clothes, folded his impromptu flag up, shoved it under his pillow and crawled in and took the best sleep of his life.

XVIII

THE BEGGARS' HONG

IF I had not made up my mind to give you the picture of China, as I saw it, I would not write that which follows, and even writing it, I feel bound to advise those who are supersensitive to human miseries to pass it over. It has to do with beggars. Not so very far away from the place where I stopped in Chung-King is a "beggars' hong," a beggars' headquarters.

Every morning about sun-up the beggars issue forth from this place and every night they swarm back to it. They are given a small per cent. of their collections if they are successful, and they are fed if they collect nothing and many of them come in empty-handed.

The population of Chung-King is not in a position to give bountifully. For the most part it must be held up in the name of sweet charity. The poverty of the run of the people in this interior city is a thing that cannot be described

by anybody except some one who has suffered it. Economically I suppose the cause is over-population—if you take the superficial view of it. In fact, the trouble is under-production. Men give their brawn to the most laborious drudgery, they are sober—China being the most abstemious country I have ever seen—and there are no loafers—for even the children work. But the sum total of all their labours is a heart-sickening product—pinching poverty. I am not going to give prices—they could not mean much. Here is a thing which will give a glimpse into the desperate conditions. Some Chinamen smoke opium—not many proportionately and mostly the well-to-do, for opium is expensive. Long use of opium weakens the stomach and makes it difficult to retain food. One thing that can be digested is milk from a woman's breast. And it is possible to send around the corner and bring a young mother to be milked.

Outside the silk shops, I should say that the average shop in Chung-King would invoice less than five dollars gold. The family lives in the store. Each family has a cat, invariably tethered, usually a dog, nearly always mangy and supported on offal, about three or four children, often with skins as black as the ace of spades, and one or two pot-bellied pigs. These animals

divide their time between the street and the store. The beasts and their owners are covered with vermin, and disease is rampant. I should say that seventy-five per cent. of the people are pock-marked. The death rate from tuberculosis is known to be high, and the streets are vile with spittle.

These conditions are the result, in my opinion, not of racial ineptitude for better things, but of age-old poverty—the fecund mother of all disease. In the midst of this civic cess-pool, the population is a smiling one. The people call across the street from shop to shop cheerily. The children frolic in the streets. Every courtesy is extended a stranger. There is no open brutality to man or beast; there is no drunkenness; and there is very little homicide.

The people are not meat-eaters. They live on vegetables mostly, and eggs. The beef animal is a beast of burden, or is used for draft purposes. And in this connection, the Chinese cow, having been put to the plow, has turned perverse. She will not enter into economic relations with the milkman. She will give down milk for the calf, but not for the trade. As a consequence, one of the most common sights in this city is the milkman's procession. It usually consists of the milkman in front with a

couple of tin-cups and a folded calf-skin over his arm. Follows a cow with a calf; a cow without a calf and another cow with a calf. You may order a quart of milk from the milkman. So far as the cows with the calves are concerned it is a scrap between the calves and the milkman for the milk. The milkman usually comes out second. Better results are obtained from the calfless cow. This is accomplished by rank trickery. When all is ready, the milkman unfolds the calf-skin and holds it up to the nose of the cow, who sniffs it and begins to lick it; at the same time a boy takes a stick and scratches the cow behind the ear to make her feel good, and simultaneously a third Chinaman gets to work on the udder. A good yield from the three cows is a quart. It will rarely go more. You can hardly blame the milkman, if the local gossip is true, when he conceals a bulb of water up his sleeve and helps fill up the tin-cup. A quart of milk costs about 336 cash, or nine cents gold. As the meal of the average Chinese here costs about twenty cash—a little over one cent gold—you can see that the run of Chinese never have a taste of milk after they are weaned.

This contribution to the dairy statistics of the world which I have made has been for the purpose of indicating in a graphic way just how

poor a Chinese population can be and just how desperate the situation an ordinary, that is an unorganized beggar, would face. In truth a lone, independent beggar in Chung-King would not be a beggar long—he would starve. Hence the beggar's hong.

The hong keeps books. The beggar is sent out in the morning to haunt a shop which the books show hasn't whacked up for a certain number of days. The beggar strolls down to the appointed place and stays until the proprietor of the shop comes across with the coin. The beggar thereupon reports to the hong, and the merchant's name is checked off and he is granted immunity for a certain period of time. The dose is then repeated. There is nothing in China which is at once so funny and so terribly revolting as this operation. I posted myself on a certain corner and watched the game. I didn't look at the beggar at first—I had to brace myself for that, but I knew he was a beggar and then watched the merchant, his staff and his family. Chinese clerks have a curious way of standing in a row in a shop. This row of Chinese on this occasion went into a violent state of argumentative eruption. There was the beggar, crouched on his hunkers and, there he would stay until he was paid. Every Chinese in that

shop knew this was true, but no one wanted to give up any coin. From a state of violent argument, a shadow of deep and silent disgust grew and enveloped the store. It seemed to be settling solidly and solemnly into their Chinese souls that the beggar would not go away unless he was paid, and that the longer they delayed in paying him the less they would have to pay him with. For it was a moral certainty that the presence of the beggar would kill off trade—would absolutely paralyze it. While a Chinaman can usually smile, a Chinaman who can't is a truly amusing spectacle. And there the absurdity of the scene before you ends. For you are certain to look at the beggar, and if you do, you will find yourself under the necessity of bracing every nerve in your body.

The merchants were not long in making up their minds. After a short confab, they dropped a few coppers in the beggar's bowl. He counted them, struggled to his feet and moved away in the direction of the hong, a spectre of life more terrible than death ever sent from the grave to affright mankind.

XIX

THE COMMERCE OF SZECHUAN

YOU never really realize how difficult it is to get completely out of touch with the world until you come to the Far West of China. Just beyond are the forbidden stretches of Thibet and the unexplored crags of the Himalayas. Chung-King itself, is in barbarian territory. There isn't a wheel in the city—everything goes in baskets or in chairs—nor a telephone, nor a faucet. And yet about twenty million dollars' worth of trade annually filters through the town to the outside world.

I don't suppose there is a normal school-boy in America who doesn't go through the stage of curiosity that I did—when seated at the table he begins to pop questions at his father about the food—what is cinnamon? Where do they get pepper? Of what is the table-cloth made? The answers to these and similar questions take the average youth into imaginative travels all over the world. I think my first desire to

see China awoke in a grocery, where some highly ornate tin-boxes with teas and spices from the Celestial kingdom stood in a row.

Now, in China, I found my old-time interest in the origin of many articles of every day use reviving, and the more so because this province of Szechuan, known as the "garden of China," has such a great variety of products.

Take, for instance, white wax. If you go over to the drug store you will find a bottle full of white crystals. It is white wax and it is used for coating pills. Now you may be dead sure that wax came from Szechuan. But in a thousand guesses you wouldn't be able to hit upon the way it is made. Once a year thousands of Chinese from the outlying districts pour into town carrying curious cocoons. They all arrive in the period of a few days. Then one night—and it is always the same night—the cocoons hatch out grubs. Every man takes the grubs and puts them on the mulberry trees. The grubs get busy and chew up the mulberry and spit out this white wax. It is gathered, collected and sent abroad and eventually winds up in those drug store bottles.

In the same drug store you will find a row of pretty bottles on a show-case, and presently a young woman will come in, sniff daintily at the

bottles and exclaim over them. It is perfume. The basis of it is probably civet, and it comes from this province. The mountains in the west are full of all kinds of wild animals, but more numerous than all the rest are deer. The supply is inexhaustible. A big part of the population live by hunting these deer. From every deer killed they extract a little sack of civet. These sacks are collected, put into packages which weigh about a pound and are exported. The native gets about seven dollars (gold) for one of these sacks, and it is a lucrative business. France takes more of it than America does.

Of course, the biggest export is silk. Like everything else, the silk business is a family affair. Every family has its herd of worms and its mulberry trees. Most of the silk is spun into yarn and the yarn is sent abroad. That isn't saying that the Chinese do not weave a lot of silk themselves, for they do. You can't poke your head into a house without seeing a Chinese boy (I see no girls at it) throwing the bobbin. But the Chinese silk fabric doesn't catch the eye like ours. It is either white or solid color. They don't know the fancy silk. I tried to buy some for shirts and I know. I have haggled over a good many pieces, and I have found that Chinese silk comes in Chinese feet—about thir-

teen inches—and is only half the width of ours. It costs on an average about fifty cents (gold) a yard. There are wild silk-worms here. Their product is pongee.

That brings up the matter of dyes. The Chinese dyes are vegetable and very vivid and I suppose lasting. They not only use them, but they send the stuff out of which they are made to other lands. Red comes from a flower called saf-flower. It is exported in large quantities. Indigo gives them their blue, and their green comes from a seed of which the world takes a lot.

One of the heaviest productions for America in this part of China is rhubarb. It is sent to the United States apparently by the shipload. It is used in medicine and seems to be a stronger article than that which we grow at home.

Bristles from pigs are collected, sorted into lengths, tied into bunches, like shaving brushes and sent abroad. I see no evidences of the sale of human hair, but the export of it when the Chinamen cut off their queues, as they have done, must have been awful. If I were a woman and had a switch, I would have it disinfected just as a factor of safety. Duck feathers are shipped out to the United States by the ton—and a ton of duck feathers is some ton. Of

course, eggs are sent also. Turmeric, a small root, which gives prepared mustard some of its color, is another exportation from here.

One of the richest products of this province is wood oil. It is pressed from a nut of a tree. The nut has four pods and these are crushed and the expressed oil shipped to America, the heaviest consumer. It is used by the big paint manufacturers.

Tea is one of the important exports. By the way, I had a lot of sport with an expert tea-taster. I took a lot of different teas and numbered them. Then I made the whole lot into tea in different cups which I also numbered on the bottom. The tea-taster, who was doing all this for my especial benefit, would taste a cup of tea and then call out the number to me. He hit the right number every time, but it made him smack his lips several times and think hard. After I had finished my test, this taster told me that in the busy season, when he would test as many as 1,200 cups a day, the mental strain—not the tea, for he never swallows any—but just the mental strain of trying to grade it right—would give him insomnia. I wasn't missing any bets about tea—for I have used it for years instead of coffee—and I had this expert make me a cup of tea. He weighed the tea—a very small

amount, by the way, and brewed it in water for five minutes—in water that had just come to a boil—and this is of the utmost importance—in water that had never been boiled before. I might say, in passing, that if you don't watch these three points—(1) weigh your tea, (2) brew by the watch, (3) use fresh-boiled water—you do not know what tea tastes like. They don't use sugar and cream.

There are many other things sent into the world by this people, but most of them are products which we have at home. Among them are asbestos, mica, copper, antimony, coal, sulphur, hemp, salt and sugar (the crude brown variety being three cents gold a pound; refined, six cents). Incidentally I ran across a stuff here the other day that the Chinese cannot sell, but it looks to me as if an enterprising American could put it on a commercial basis. It was a vegetable asbestos—a flat fungus which appears on rocks. It looks like toadstool, only it is tougher. No market has been found for it. It does not burn.

Two other products interested me—one, vegetable tallow, made from a plant and looking and smelling like animal tallow. The United States buys huge quantities of it. The other, the oil from the soy bean, which is used in cooking, and

which is said to be the basis of most of the bottled table sauces for meats we have.

Most of the farm products of the province are consumed there. There are many varieties of rice. Wheat and buckwheat are abundant. You see kialong (millet) everywhere. Sweet potatoes are fine, and Irish potatoes, while small, are sound and mealy. Peanuts flourish, and the oil from them is used in cooking. There is much cotton, but it is pretty short staple, as a rule.

As a matter of fact, Szechuan has everything—save one thing—up-to-dateness. That is, it hasn't organization. Every home is a factory. That doesn't go in this world any more. Theoretically it looks good, but it won't work. The lesson you learn in China is that associated effort is the greatest find humanity has made, in an industrial way, and if we in the United States had the corporation idea properly harnessed, which we haven't, we would find ourselves living next door to heaven.

XX

THE DOOM OF GEOMANCY

CHINA is changing, and the thing which is bringing the change is a republican form of government. The fact that change is coming is a striking tribute to the potency of the republic idea. For the republic idea will probably never be called upon to go up against a fiercer proposition than China.

China is the last word in conservatism. In comparison with China, a stand-patter in the United States is a raging, torch-bearing, fire-spitting radical. China has been traveling the reactionary circle for four thousand years. A thing was right because it was old, and wrong because it was new. Sequentially the Chinese way was the correct one, and the manner of other nations erroneous.

When I say that this ancient spirit is breaking down, I do not want to carry the impression that it is being swept away—far from it—it is being eaten away as by a slow acid. But it is

certainly crumbling around the edges, and I want to give you some instances of it.

The first thing to get brittle and break off is ceremony. It will be followed by the evaporation of the pig-headed idea of national superiority, and the substitution of a rational patriotism. And when the hour strikes that China ceases merely to know that she is superior and moves restlessly with the desire to prove she is superior, it will be a new day in the great East. I do not despair of the event. I confidently expect it.

Since the beginning of recorded time China has considered all the other nations of the earth vassals. The name "China" is not known to the Chinese. The country is the "middle kingdom." This middle kingdom is supposed to be central in four seas, and in these seas the inferior nations exist. Virtually all the Chinese to-day believe that Europeans and Americans are inferior to Chinese. This is their attitude of mind. But it meets with frequent contradiction. A white foreigner enjoys privileges and immunities which even the humblest Chinaman must note. In Szechuan, where the bandits are active, they let white people alone. Annoyance of these means trouble from the nation to which the white man belongs. The licking Japan gave

to China in 1894, and the high-handed demands Japan has latterly made of China, have added to the growing impression the Chinese have that China is not necessarily the whole thing.

This impression, of course, is a vague one popularly, but it exists. The average Chinese has no more idea of international relations than a goat has of geometry, but he does gather some inklings of it, nevertheless. I rarely walked down the street in Chung-King that I did not feel the whole population had a feeling of kindly condescension towards me because I was not a Chinese, but at the same time they knew and showed that if anything should happen to me, somebody would answer for it. They were more certain about this than I was.

The Chinese in this province have been closed up for forty centuries. This is all they know, and naturally they believe it is the center of things universally, just as they believe that a man who doesn't believe in "feng-shui" (which I will treat a little later on) is mentally deficient.

A people of this outlook naturally believe that all their customs are best, and therefore resist change. And when people get into this frame of mind, ceremony thrives.

Now, ceremony is the very thing in China which is giving way before the new order. One

of the first things we associate with any idea of China is the kowtow. For a good many centuries, Chinamen were expected to throw themselves on their marrow bones and bump their foreheads on the ground before a person of high official rank. The emperor demanded three kneelings and nine bumps. I haven't seen a kowtow in China since I came. They are cutting it out, and it will soon completely disappear.

Then there is the matter of queues. A few years ago virtually the whole male population wore them. The old idea that they were a badge of serfdom, instituted by the Manchus as a tribute to their horses, on account of the resemblance of the queue to a horse's tail—this old idea had disappeared in the course of two hundred and fifty years, and the average Chinese felt a pride in his hair. But when the edict to cut them off came, the Chinese almost universally complied. From generations of devotion to long hair, the Chinese has now gone to the other extreme, and delights to have the clippers used over his entire noggin.

I came across a merchant who told me that he would not stand any longer for conventional nonsense. That is, he wanted to get down directly to business.

The old style in China was somewhat like

this. A man wanted a suit of clothes and called on his tailor:

Man—"How is my honourable and distinguished friend this morning?"

Tailor—"Your despised friend is pleased to greet his most virtuous patron."

Man—"In my poor and humble way, I have been noticing that my clothes are getting thread-bare."

Tailor—"I notice that the very fine clothes of my distinguished patron are splendid, and not to be duplicated by so poor a workman as myself."

Man—"I have said to myself that I ought to have a new suit, and that my honourable and distinguished friend would be the very man to supply me from his honourable stock."

Tailor—"If my friend will be pleased to look at my inferior stock, I shall have great pleasure in showing him."

The extent to which this sort of flub-dub was carried in China is really beyond belief. If you went directly at a point, you seemed to palsy a Chinaman mentally. Ask him a question point blank, and his mind stopped working. He couldn't think without the preliminaries. Barter became absurd—still is. When an object is known to be worth ten dollars, the merchant

starts at fifteen dollars and the purchaser at five. They quarrel their way upward and downward to ten dollars. It wastes time. And it isn't good merchandising. But already you run across one-price stores in China, and this merchant to whom I was talking said that when he went to his tailor now he said: "Good morning, I want a suit of clothes." If the tailor went into a state of mental catalepsy, he hunted up another tailor.

The greatest victory over convention in China up to date, however, is in the matter of feng-shui. No white man has ever understood feng-shui. I heard a missionary in America, thirty-five years ago, try to explain it. He didn't succeed. No white man can. Feng-shui means wind and water. It is the science of knowing what is an auspicious place, and the art of finding it. Let us say that a man in an American town wanted to locate a new hotel in his town according to feng-shui. He would consult, if he were Chinese, the priests. Let us say they made a scientific survey and decided on a certain corner. Now, suppose a rival builder didn't consult the priests and resolved to put up a business block across the street and it was a story or two higher than the hotel. The priests might say that this was not according to feng-

shui and there would be a riot, with a life-long feud between the two citizens. Over here you can't do anything without bumping into feng-shui. No man thinks of locating anything over here, not even his own grave, without consulting it. This sounds funny enough, but when the Occidentals came in, with their telegraph poles and smoke-stacks, it caused a heap of trouble and some blood-shed. A smoke-stack on on electric light plant simply knocked the feng-shui in the whole town out of kilter. So did the telegraph poles.

But the Chinese are knocking under. They don't like to do it, but the point is they are standing for the most flagrant violations of their most ancient and revered custom—geomancy.

That is a long step for China. It is equivalent to asking America to change the name of the days of the week, put forty-five days in the month, and lengthen the year out to seven hundred and thirteen days. That would confuse us. And ignoring feng-shui confuses the Chinese.

But the republic idea and the spirit of progress are bringing them to it.

XXI

A CHINESE PARTY

I HAVE attended a Chinese party. The French consul in Chung-King knew I wanted to attend one, so he contrived to get me an invitation. I shall give you an account of "the pleasant time that was had" and "by one who was there." The party ran from two o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. During this time the guests continuously arrived and departed. This gentle device of stretched-out entertainment, prevalent in China, puts the kibosh on conventional liars. You can't say you didn't come because of a previous engagement. You have ten hours to choose from.

We chose six o'clock, because we wanted to light on dinner. I figure that I saw a real Chinese party—except that I know that my presence put some restraint on the crowd, but perhaps not so much after all.

When I arrived the host met me at the front door and personally escorted me into a big ante-

room paved in cement, on either side of which were chairs permanently set against the walls with small tables between them, the whole having the appearance of a small lodge room just before they let in the candidate. I took a seat and studied the guests. Across from me were three Chinese, a very tall one, a middling sized man with a scraggly moustache and a fat one.

We did a lot of fancy and plain sitting. Then a singing girl arrived. She was very richly attired in silk and her feet were very small. Her cheeks were not rouged, but her hair was greased a lot. The host met her and accompanied her to a seat. Next there arrived a big-boned, business-like Chinese with a musical instrument which looked like a croquet mallet with the handle cut off. He tuned up. Then he struck up a tune.

The girl, evidently much embarrassed, put her handkerchief to her mouth and sang. She had a pretty fair voice, but it was lost in that music. It isn't fair to criticize anybody's music, but when it comes to giving an imitation of a guinea hen dying of asthma, a Chinese fiddle is entitled to the blue ribbon. The song she sang was dreadfully waily and whiney.

The singing girls continued to arrive and sing. They filtered in and out all evening, going from

entertainment to entertainment. Eventually dinner was announced.

One of the surprises for me in China is the absence of luxury. Somewhere I had gathered the impression that a Chinese feast was usually in a room smothered in rich, damasked hangings, the ceiling a pendant gold mine of intricate carvings and so on. On the contrary, everything of that kind I have seen is exceedingly primitive and bare. It was so in this case. I was the guest of honor, and I had to start everything. As I never was much on chop sticks, I rather slowed things up. Now, I know that most people have attended Chinese dinners in America. You may find them in New York, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver or Frisco without much trouble. But this dinner was in the wild and woolly west of China, and for that reason I am going to tell about the food, for I must have had the real thing.

Before we sat down we were given a teacup full of chop suey. Then each man was given a very hot towel to wipe his face. We were then given a cup of tea—the only time it appeared. Next came a little pie—about three inches in diameter. It was made of persimmon. Then the towels came around again. Hereafter I will just say towels.

We sat down. In front of us were small saucers containing small bits of breaded fish, shrimp, sliced duck, sliced cucumbers stacked up like hay, pickled pig lungs and very old eggs. These eggs had been varnished and buried for several years. They were jellied, a bit acid and very good. Towels. Next came a small cherry-like fruit—it is the berry of the lotus plant. It was very good. Towels. Two soup bowls containing a soup-like mixture were brought in, which, after I had speared some of it with my chop sticks, the company assailed with enthusiasm. It was boiled shark fins. It didn't strike me as very palatable. Towels. Next came young bamboo, boiled. Something like asparagus. Towels. This was followed by a boiled vegetable tasting very much like raw oysters. Towels. Suddenly there appeared in the midst of us a suckling pig with the skin very brown and cut into squares. I poked off a piece of this skin and watched. A hollow, hot, thin-skinned biscuit was brought in. Each Chinese opened up this biscuit, put his piece of pig skin in it, closed it up and ate it as a sandwich. As soon as all the skin had been removed and I was figuring on a piece of pig a coolie came in and took the pig away. That was the last we saw of it. Towels. This was followed by small saucers

full of brown duck skin. Towels. The next thing—in a soup bowl—puzzled me, but I finally made it out to be chicken neck cut up very fine. Towels. The next thing I recognized. I had seen it before. It was bird nest soup. This soup is made of a sweet bird nest which is gathered off trees in the tropics. I didn't fancy it, although I knew that it cost like sixty—somebody told me that fifty dollars wouldn't pay for the two dishes before us. Towels. All this time wine was being served out of pewter teapots. It was poured into small cups—holding about two thimblesful—and was heated. It is rice wine and quite weak. When the bird nest soup had disappeared we were served jujubes—a sort of date—and then the chief dish of the evening appeared. It is called Huo-Kuo-Tzu. Huo means hat, Kuo means dish, Tzu means a lot of things. They were bamboo, egg, chicken, ham, duck, all shredded and all on separate saucers. Then powdered flour, pepper, salt and garlic. These were all placed around a big copper chafing dish. Alcohol was lighted under this and water in it boiled. Then each of the guests reached over the table and threw something in. This was done with much exclamation. It was a wild scene, and, as I was ready to go the limit, I grabbed up the garlic and dumped it in. After

the whole mixture had boiled a while, each guest took a portion in a small bowl full of hot rice. This was the most palatable dish of the evening. Towels.

The company then repaired to another room and played Chinese dominoes. There are one hundred and thirty-six dominoes in a set, and the play was fierce and noisy. Every player smoked.

I left before midnight, and what I carried away was the sight of one Chinese smoking a metal pipe which gives only one puff. A small girl stood at his side, blew the pipe out, filled it, stuck it in the man's mouth, he puffed, and she blew it out, filled it, stuck it in his mouth, he puffed it again. I watched this operation for an hour and a half. It seemed endless. But it wasn't, for just as I was leaving the man put the pipe away and a coolie brought him a bamboo pole six feet long with a cigar stuck in the other end. The coolie lighted it and stood there holding the pole and the man puffed away and went on with his dominoes.

XXII

A STRANGE CEREMONY

I AM going to give you an impression I got at Hua Ngai Hsu temple, near Chung-King. I don't expect you will see what I am driving at. Indeed, I am not sure what I am driving at myself. And it really doesn't matter. If the thing I wrote was too coherent, it wouldn't convey the impression I got. Hua Ngai Hsu temple is, so far as I know, the only thing of its kind in China. You are to remember that this is up next to Thibet, which is, in turn, up next to India and Persia and Arabia, out of which all religions have come. Here at this place the Zoroaster idea caught and hung on like a frog on a rock in a swift current. The temple is Buddhistic with fire trimmings. Its priests have holes burned in their heads in life, and their bodies are reduced to ashes and stood along in rows of ginger jars after they are dead. Both these rites are extraordinary in China.

I had prowled around the temple, which is

very large, and had visited the little stucco building where they put the body of the dead priest and build a fire beneath it and had seen the rows of ginger jars. I had visited the chamber where, before a tremendous gold Buddha, flanked on either side with great graven bronze bells, the novitiates kneel every February and have the holes burned into their skulls and had been hauled up on a high terrace where I could study the roof of the main temple.

This roof was covered with symbols, to which a man might give a life-time study. The ones which interested me most were porcelain dolls, in pairs, which straddled the long, curved gables. Each pair consisted of a man and woman carrying in their hands utensils I could not identify. They all represented people of a very ancient China, for the women's feet were not bound. Each pair was a pleasant couple, their rigid smiles seemingly in contradiction to the dragons and elephants and tigers springing up from the roof all about them. The ornate roof, of yellow and green porcelain, was beautiful.

I was alone. The day was Indian summer. As far as I could see over the hills the green slopes swam in a golden ocean of autumn sunlight. The temple was silent—as dumb as the

placid, the calm and squint-eyed Buddha in the wall before me. Somewhere a bird sounded incessantly, with little rests between the notes, a sharp, treble tattoo over and over again. It was one of those days when the hush in a sacred place, as in a prairie graveyard, seems a product of the golden flush of the landscape. A little vagrant wind came rustling around the corner of the colored shrine, scraped a knife-shaped bell-tongue against the rim of a tiny temple bell in competition with the industrious bird, and then left off as though discouraged with the effort.

One thought and one thought only is possible in such surroundings. It is the thought of humanity's age-old hungry reach out of the finite into the infinite. The one thing in a material world worth-while is the invisible, the inaudible, the intangible. The thing of strongest proof is that which cannot be proved, and to the end of time Faith stands in first place, not Fact. Let a man think and he will cease to see. Let him think and he will cease to hear. Let him think and he will let off contact with the world. For if he think long and deeply enough, the thing he sees and the thing he hears and that which he touches become gross fictions, and that which he cannot know becomes alone true knowledge.

In a workaday world people kick this proposition out of their way a good deal. The man who is slacking about in the eddies of ambition, or beating his way through to a fortune with a club, or riding the cyclone of a great passion of any kind naturally doesn't see much in it at the time, but when he flips the pages of the book of life under his thumb and looks at the last page to see how the plot comes out, as most of us do sometimes, he always runs against the brutal fiction of Death. No one who is rational has ever accepted death for the truth. As a fact, it meets every requirement of the true and sensible avouch of the senses (Horatio's test) but as a truth it is a rank masquerading, four-flushing imposter.

The long, warm flushes of the waning afternoon shifted slowly on the green and yellow roof and lighted up the emerald eyes of a red dragon with a white, unbroken egg in his fangs.

Here every year come a string of devotees who have rejected living and are on a dogged search for life. They are Chinese. They have come, by accident, as the rest of us come into the world, and, unlike most of us, into a world that is almost wholly a struggle to survive to the next meal. Hunger is an inconvenience with the west. It is a grand, insatiable passion with the east. There are forty thousand char-

acters in the Chinese dictionary. I doubt if there is one which stands for "enough." The Chinese, most of them, are born hungry, live hungry and die with the vision in their eyes of a victualless hell. Food is the one consideration, the alpha and omega of existence, the mainspring of effort, the end of ambition. We have many refinements which obscure bread and butter. No Chinese ever loved or hated, or lost himself in the joys of invention or reveled in the passions of intrigue, that there was not always the competitor, Hunger, knocking about in the walls of his stomach and insisting jealously on a division of his interest. We give flowers to the dead in America. They give food to the corpse in China.

It would seem that in China the first word in the first line of the first chapter in life and the last would be to eat. And yet every February a string of novitiates come here for the purpose of showing their independence of Reality and contempt for Death and his chief lieutenant—the Gigantic Lie—Pain.

For three days and nights they sit in their dark cells and wait for the hour when they shall demonstrate that the senses which give men joy and sorrow are to be put away as trivialities and beneath the notice of those who know that the physical is not only inferior to the spiritual,

but in the bright light of the spirit the physical is in fact non-existent, that Fact is, in truth, fiction, and Faith the one worth-while proof of living. On the appointed hour these Chinamen file down into the temple and kneel in the dark on little benches. The big bells begin to hum a rich thunder. The candles flicker before the placid Buddha. Acolytes pass among the kneeling figures and fix on the head of each six little soft cones of charcoal and incense. These are all lighted simultaneously. They burn slowly down to the shaven heads. The burning occupies a half hour. All the time the big bells are humming and the candles glitter. There is no sound, save this and the mumbled prayers of the devotees, who from this hour forth are to carry on their heads nice little bare spots like the tops of billiard cues. Now these are superior to the senses. They have planted, for once at least, their feet on the neck of Fact.

The Frenchman who had brought me to the temple came up to me. I knew he had witnessed the ceremony last February.

"How many were there?" I asked.

"Eighty-four," he said.

"And the smell?"

"It was really not bad," he said.

THE TEEMING LIFE OF SZECHUAN

XXIII

CHINA'S ENEMIES—DIRT AND GRAFT

IF you should put it to a vote in China, the Chinese would declare their greatest enemy to be Japan. To the average informed Chinese' imagination, Japan is a dragon circling around China, licking its chops and trying to decide where to bite first. While I have come to feel that Japan is laying for China, and I fancy the world is to have a great row about it and that the United States is liable to get into it, I don't think Japan is China's greatest enemy. I put Dirt and Dishonesty in first place.

Far be it from me to butt into a situation that is four thousand years old with a bathtub and a failing for reform. There are evidences a-plenty that China has managed to blunder along in the midst of filth for a long time. But it has survived a good deal as the buffalo on the prairies survived for centuries. There was no one around gunning for buffalo. China long was safe between a big ocean on one side and a

savage continent on the other. Now the ocean has become a mere ditch pretty much at present the private property of an ambitious pioneer—Japan—and the savage continent is penetrated by a Russian railroad. Between them Japan and Russia contemplate doing various things to China, and China can come out of it something more than a vassal state if she will do certain things.

I can imagine nothing more auspicious for the future of China than the appearance of a leader, divinely inspired, who would discover means of putting down Dirt and Dishonesty. I don't mean that he should entirely eliminate them, but that he should in a measure reduce them and bring them under a reasonable degree of control.

There are other countries which are dirty. Some of the nations of Europe specialize in dirt, but no one knows what dirt is and what dirt can be until he comes to China. Some cities are cleaner than others, but they are all dirty, and the dirtiest defy description. Only in China does one comprehend what the hymn writer meant when he wrote that "every prospect pleases and only man is vile." I have always liked to look at people. When I wanted to enjoy myself I have always had recourse to the plan

of taking a seat somewhere and just watching people. But in China I find myself hunting just plain, unadorned scenery for relief.

It's the dirt that gets on your nerves. It bubbles up from the pavements and oozes out of the walls. It drips from the eaves and streams out of the earth. It stains the water they drink and streaks the food they eat. The clothes some of them wear reek with it, and the beds many of them sleep in squirm with it. It greets the baby at birth and kicks the aged into the grave at the end.

Now, dirt means one thing—disease. Disease in China is rampant. There are no vital statistics in China, but some men are fairly good guessers. An American physician who has been in Chung-King for twenty-five years told me that at least seventy-five per cent. of the population die in infancy. Dirt claims them as its own. Dysentery is a monster in this part of China. It mows people down as a new-whetted scythe cuts sunflowers. Every white man in this part of the world wears a flannel band over his stomach at night in terror of it. About half the fellows say there is nothing in the flannel idea, and the rest contend that there is, but they all wear them. Smallpox is as common as colds in America. It is just as malignant

among the Chinese as anywhere else and just as fatal, but the Chinese name it "the heavenly flower" and do not guard against it. White people vaccinate and keep on vaccinating and escape. Occasionally some white man comes along who doesn't believe in vaccination. He doesn't last long. The late American consul here, a young man from Connecticut, didn't vaccinate, and last spring he died a terrible death. Typhoid takes its toll also. The Chinese, who are in a measure immune, have a lighter form than occidentals, but the occidentals largely escape it by inoculation. Forms of eczema, cancer and leprosy are frequent. Eye trouble is frightfully prevalent. Virtually everybody has intestinal bacteria, and hookworm among the barefoot is universal.

I believe that if China lacks physical stamina this tornado of disease is back of a lot of it. You see many splendidly built young people in China, but you find mighty few really old men, and the person over seventy is rare. They peter out before three score and ten.

China is building up an army. It may drill them until the cows come home, teach them marksmanship and give them the best of officers, but unless the population, from which the soldiers are drawn, is protected from disease the

Chinese army in any serious contest isn't going to do very much.

Now, I am aware that physical stamina is also dependent on mental reactions, and you could clean up China and yet not give her a capable army. There is another thing needed in China, and that is for someone to rise up and baste squarely between the eyes official dishonesty, which, unless it is curbed, will finish off the new republic without the necessity of outside help.

Traditionally Chinese have been commercially honest. There hasn't been much that is ethical about it. The Chinese merchant has been honest because it was the best policy. Officially the Chinese overlords in the past did pretty much as they pleased. They taxed the people, and then gave up to the central government just as little as they dared. When the republic came in this system was continued, and a lot of people claim that it has grown more flagrant. In any event, there has grown up in China a vicious system of "squeeze."

"Squeeze" as it has developed in China is not the mere creature of avarice alone; it is in part the product of a cunning desire to do the other fellow up and to luxuriate in the thought that you have stung him good and hard. As between equals, as in a horse trade, the game may not

be particularly demoralizing. If the other fellow gets the spavined nag off on you, it is your look-out. Between a superior and a subordinate the practice becomes vicious, and will as readily wreck a nation as it will a firm or a family.

An appalling number of people in China recognize "squeezing" as legitimate, and defend it. They expect their servants to squeeze, and consequently they participate in the squeeze themselves by underpaying the servants. For instance, a man has a head servant who has four assistants, which assistants have each six subordinates. The head servant will withhold ten per cent. of the assistants' wages; the assistants will withhold ten per cent. of the subordinates' wages. If the man increases the wages, the "hold-out" increases proportionately. The squeeze increases in percentage with the amount of money in sight. This practice starts with the official class. It can tear down national confidence, and unless it is stopped it may wreck China.

Early America stopped counterfeiting by making the penalty death. A few heads of officials lopped off would probably put a stop to the "squeeze" in China. In all events, it would moderate it.

XXIV

THE WAY OF CHINESE BANDITS

I WATCHED a party of missionaries setting out for Cheng-tu. First there were fifty soldiers, then a couple of chairs containing the missionaries, each carried by four men, then a cavalcade of ten men loaded with goods. Everybody here says, "What will the bandits say to that?" For the bandits between Chung-King and Cheng-tu have broken out, and they are raising blue blazes.

It started with the British consul at Cheng-tu. On his way down to Chung-King the bandits attacked him to his great affront. Then the bandits carried away a couple of Canadian women and robbed them of seven hundred dollars. This was about a week ago, and since then the bandits have been taking pot shots at nearly every one who has gone that way. The foreign consuls refuse to grant passports any longer, but in some way these missionaries persuaded the Chinese general to give them a

military escort for their special protection. The missionaries sailed away with a look in their faces that seemed to indicate that they weren't dead sure whether the soldiers conducting them were bandits or not.

For the bandit proposition in this part of China is certainly a complicated business. When it comes to regular, three-ply irregularity these Chinese bandits could give the Mexican variety cards and spades. Sometimes a Chinese bandit is a soldier, sometimes he is a citizen and sometimes he is both at the same time.

Yuan Shih Kai, who tried to turn China into a monarchy, is responsible for most of it. The generals in Szechuan didn't know whether to follow Yuan or to fight him. But the generals in the next State, Yunnan, decided to scrap him and his monarchy idea, and they sent an army up to help this bunch make up its mind. Then Yuan sent his army out from Peking to help persuade them his way. So, while Yuan died and his monarchy scheme deflated, Szechuan, before the summer was over, found itself entertaining three armies. After it was all over the Yunnan army, which was for the republic, started home, the Peking army also headed back to Peking, and the home army prepared to settle down to a life of peace again. Now, armies, if

well organized, can move around without much trouble. But an army that has to take care of itself must pick its way. Pay isn't always forthcoming, and food gets scarce. This was the experience of a lot of the Yunnanese troops. They rushed up to Szechuan and saved the Chinese republic, but they weren't paid regularly and some of them not at all. They had to eat, so it became necessary for whole regiments duly under generals to seize towns and help themselves. This worked so well that whole companies detached themselves from the regular army and went into the hold-up business in earnest. It seemed to pay. It wasn't a very soldierly thing to do, and there was some talk about a soldier's right, after he had quit the army and become a bandit, to take his gun along. But the soldier-bandit answered that, all right. He simply kept the gun for pay and let it go at that. Now, a bandit never has and never will work in an unfriendly neighborhood. Somebody is liable to get rude and plug him in the back. So when one of these bands of soldier-bandits occupied a neighborhood they forced citizens to join their ranks. That will explain why some bandits are in uniform and armed with modern rifles and why some are in cotton gowns armed with hoes.

I talked to a man who had been captured by bandits. They marched him up a hill and put him in a pen guarded by a lot of men with hoes. During the night the bandits grew confidential and told the captive their story and begged him to use his influence to get them pardoned. They didn't want to get on the government payroll, as they could if they had guns, but merely to escape with their necks.

It follows, in such a state of affairs, that the man with a uniform and a gun has the edge on the plain, garden variety of brigand.

There are two fields for bandit activity. The main roads of travel are two. One is the overland route between Chung--King and Cheng-tu. This road is a stone pavement about five feet wide, and it runs through graveyards, rice fields, villages and mountain passes. It is the road everybody here takes on the way to Thibet and the Himalaya mountains. Therefore it is pretty well traveled. The other route is the Min river, which flows past Cheng-tu to the Yangtse. Everybody returning from Cheng-tu to Chung-King uses the river. No one uses it going out. The Min river is not navigable to steam vessels. Junks alone are used. So the bandits operate upon the people who are going up the Cheng-tu road in chairs or coming down

the busy Min river in long lines of junks.

No one likes to be held up. And no white man or woman can stand being held up by a Chinaman. It adds insult to injury. You can appreciate the feeling of the British consul at Cheng-tu when he arrived boiling over the indignity.

He was coming down the Min river at the head of a long line of junks. He was snoozing under the cover of the junk when the bandits let loose from the banks. Operating a junk on the Min river is equivalent to walking a tight rope in wooden shoes. It is dangerous in the extreme. The stream is rapid and rocky and the boat is brought through by a man who stands on the prow with a bamboo pole and shoves the boat off the rocks as it plunges down stream; and plunges is the word, for the least mistake by the gentleman with the bamboo pole would mean ordinarily a quick and wet death to all on board.

When the bandits turned loose on the junk the poleman on the Consul's junk quit. A Chinaman hates lead, and this Chinaman didn't want to accumulate any. So he ducked. And when he ducked the junk went crosswise of the current and shot on to certain destruction. The Consul got up and told what he thought of all

Chinese, and this Chinese in particular, and ordered him to get to work with the pole again. But the Chinese wouldn't do it. He negotiated. He explained that if he got out there with that pole he wouldn't last as long as a pie at a picnic. But he suggested to the British consul that, as the Chinese respected foreigners, it might save the day if the British consul would step out in front under fire and let the bandits see him. They might stop when they saw who it was— a white man. As the junk was caroming around like a grain of popcorn over a hot fire, it was up to the consul to go out there and turn the bullets away with his prestige. It wasn't a pleasant thing to do. On occasions like this the light is likely to be uncertain or the eyesight of the shooters poor. It may read all right in the magazines stories for a man to step out in front of a lot of wild men and say, "Don't shoot. It is I— a white man." It may be all right in romance, but it is a hard thing to do actually.

But the Consul did it. He figured the chance of getting shot was less than that of being wrecked on the rocks, and he stepped out in front and pushed his way through the rain of bullets. And it worked like magic. The bandits dropped that junk like a hot potato. But they riddled the junks which followed, stopped them

and robbed everybody aboard of their belongings.

As I said, when the Consul reached Chung-King he was hot. The consuls all got together and framed up a sizzling protest to the Peking government. They demanded that the bandit business be suppressed. We Anglo-Saxons can always pass resolutions.

XXV

LAND AND DEMOCRACY

To my mind the young Chinese Republic has two basic advantages. The first of these is a fairly equitable disposition of land holdings and the second is the essential democracy of this people. Both are important foundation stones for a sound republic.

The final expression of freedom, materially considered, is the secure possession of a home with enough ground around it to yield subsistence to its occupants. The undoubted infringement on freedom which all men should fear is an invasion of this condition. The last twist in the rope of control any aristocracy gives a people is a monopoly in land.

China is comparatively free from the land problem. The new Republic has its big landlords and its millions of tenants, but the general aspect of the country is one of a multitude of small householders. They do not produce to sell, but to live, and yet the ground and the

product of it is their own. The reason for the survival of this widely distributed ownership is manifold and in part curious. Patriarchy, which survived in the East and went to smash in the West, enters into the proposition. In the days of Isaac and Jacob, land descended to the tribe. Probably Israel inherited the plan from the Orient, but Israel which handed its laws and ethics down to the West, did not transmit its scheme of inheritance. The idea did persist, however, in China, and the clan and the family held and hold the fee in realty. The proposition was further insured by ancestor worship, for a Chinaman is tied to the graves of his forebears. Everything of a spiritual kind makes him physically stationary. The family idea has reached degrees of development that are surprising. The most interesting figures in China are the old patriarchs one sees every day, seated sometimes on the city wall, sometimes in the doorway, wizen, spectacled, with sparse chin whiskers and showing always an inscrutable placidity, looking wiser than it is humanly possible for anybody ever to be. It would do no good to accuse them of anything, for they wouldn't take the trouble to deny it. In the West old age prints in the faces of men a confession of defeat and surrender; in the East it writes in the

wrinkles around the eyes of the the ancients an ode to victory and sets thereon the seal of authority. More frequently than not the whole village, not to say good-sized town, is inhabited by all of the same name. The old man of the family is not only the father of the whole aggregation, but he is its civil governor and its magistrate. He settles disputes and does away with the necessity of both judge and lawyer. This condition likewise has made for a perpetuation of a given calling in families. A Chinese farmer has no trouble on his hands on the score of the city's lure for his sons. They are born farmers and they will die farmers, as their ancestors have before them for centuries. This permanency of vocation has been further cinched by the absence of a money system in China worthy the name. The mortgage until lately has had little part in the agriculture of the country because interest rates have been prohibitive. The Chinese farmers have maintained among themselves for hundreds of years a form of farm credit.

The head man of a village could call the head men of other villages together and get a small loan. The expenditure of this borrowed money was under the closest surveillance of the lenders —the secret, by the way, of all successful farm

credit schemes. But money was not frequently borrowed. A singular absence of a comprehensive currency has put money in a subordinate place in China. The system is complicated. The bulk of the business is conducted in copper or brass "cash," the money with the square holes. There are at times as many as 3,200 cash in a gold dollar. Cash goes down in value as silver goes up. Now Chinese silver is open to suspicion. Formerly each province issued its own silver dollars. Frequently the man who minted the dollars put in a grosser metal and pocketed most of the real silver. No Chinaman accepts a silver dollar without testing it. He balances the coin on his forefinger and tinkles it. If it sounds right he accepts it. Some money he will not take at all. A Mexican dollar, current at Shanghai, cannot be passed at all in Szechuan. A Szechuan dollar, good in Chung-King, is no good in Shanghai. This is the result of dishonest mintage. Now the necessities of honesty cause a curious complication. The Chinese have what they call a "tael." It is not a coin. It is a unit of measurement. A man buys a water buffalo for twenty taels (say $10 gold.) He doesen't pay out twenty pieces of money, but he hands over so many hunks of silver (called shoes), the weight of which makes twenty taels. You say

this is not very complicated. All right. This is complicated. Silver is not all of the same fineness. A hunk of silver may be worth five taels, but if a man who had sold five taels of rice took his hunks of silver to buy five taels worth of silk his hunk would be turned down, because a rice tael is not as fine in silver as a silk tael. This intricacy runs all through Chinese commerce. That it results in an embargo on easy trading is obvious, and that it has helped to keep the simple Chinese farmer out of the notion of borrowing there is no doubt. Farm credit banks have now been started in China, and in time China must come to a simple and honest money system. And eventually the Chinese farmer may "buck the tiger" of interest charge on easy loans, but he hasn't done so yet, and his failure to run his plow-share through the vaults of the local bankers has had a world to do with the circumstance that in the distribution of land among the tillers of it the new Chinese Republic is in pretty good shape.

There is something similar in the factors which have kept China in its most imperial days essentially democratic. Had China had a more scientific and compact government she would have had less democracy. Indeed, if China had enjoyed over any considerable period great pros-

perity she would have been less democratic. But she has always been loosely governed and apparently she has always been wretchedly poor. In China more than in any country in the world, past or present, it is a positive disadvantage to be rich or rather, to indulge in the fantastic antics which so often follow as the prerogative of wealth. The wise man in China who gets wealth doesn't indulge in a manner of living which advertises his riches. If he does a good many people, officially and unofficially, will be after his pelf. It is an essential point in the game of accumulation in China to be secretive about it. However, the number of rich men known and unknown in China is comparatively few. The country has resisted those modern devices which produce wealth so quickly and concentrate it into the hands of the few so neatly. The big corporations, the big factory, the combination in restraint of trade have had little to do with the evolutions of society here. The Chinese are organized into guilds without number, but these guilds are largely protective. They are not by nature aggressive and predatory. Therefore, as China has neither produced nor concentrated wealth, a known plutocracy is not part of the new Republic's problems. Nor does the old Manchu aristocracy constitute an

impediment. It did not touch the life of the average Chinese in the days of its power. In its decline its prestige has petered out, and even if the republic should sink and a monarchy rise in its place it will not be the old dynasty.

For these reasons there is in China the groundwork of a real democracy ready made. It is the creature of the absence of excessive government and at the same time security in land holdings. Under the direction of government and the security of property and person under government a great and powerful republic can be built. And the task will be immeasurably more easy, because this same absence of government has left undisturbed in the country the ancient but advantageous system of widely distributed land holdings.

XXVI

CARAVANS FROM THIBET

THERE is no more curious thing in life than the vague origin of lasting impressions. When I was a boy there hung on the wall of my bed-room a chromo showing a caravan of camels moving across a desert. Ever since I first saw it, I have had a weakness for curios. Let me figure it out for you. That camel caravan was coming from somewhere and it was laden with something. The picture did not reveal where or what. But as a boy I spent many a serious five minutes over the question. In the course of time I decided that the caravan came from Central Asia and that it was laden with much spoil. That spoil had to be ancient, oriental, mysterious and rare. What it was, its shape, nature, value, I was unable to guess. But wondering about it eventually gave me a weakness about ancient and rare things. It has always been difficult for me to get by a pawnbroker's window. I had the curio hunter's bug

(that a discovery is about to be made) hard and I had it early.

I had nearly outgrown it, when I struck Chung-King. Then the old camel caravan voodoo began working again. For here is one of the places to which the caravans from Central Asia come down, and here they dump their cargoes of curios. I have gone through one of these shipments, and the transaction satisfied a longing I had had since I first met that chromo.

It is a hard, steep road from Chung-King to Thibet, the roof of the world. It is up, up, up, from one range of mountains to another. But men travel it, as they travel everywhere. And while it is not possible to reach Lhassa from this side (it is forbidden to enter the sacred city from China, apparently not from India) men do journey from Chung-King over into the heart of Asia.

The white men who make the trip from this point are Frenchmen and I had a long talk with two of them about it. They told me that the Thibetans are not Chinese; that they are big, strong men with corded muscles and shaggy heads. They are dirty beyond the power of telling, dirtier than the dirtiest of Chinese and immoral to depths beyond the most infamous thing the white man knows. In the high altitudes

they are heavily clad, and at night they sleep around the fire in sitting postures. Their meat is wild. Their potatoes (Irish) are larger than those grown anywhere in the world. They are heavy eaters. Their dogs are big and woolly like Newfoundlands and have China blue eyes. They brought a dog along. The eyes are odd, and no mistake.

With the two Frenchmen I went through the curios they had brought down out of this mysterious land. First were the bronze and gold plated gods. These were all Buddhas. One was over two thousand years old, a symbol of an early form of religion which only scholars now talk about among themselves. The god in this case has the head of a bull and the body of a man. He had twenty-four legs and thirty arms. The figure was of bronze. Another god, in a collection of fifty or more, was a gold-plated Buddha with a succession of six jeweled heads, one on top of the other, the whole figure standing over four feet high. Another Buddha had the head of an elephant. Across the bronze trunk, some vandal of a forgotten day had slashed his sword, probably to examine the metal, in the hope of finding silver or gold. Of course, these Buddhas had been stolen from temples. What the travelers had given for them

I couldn't find out—but probably a good deal, for ancient things like these are not picked up cheaply anywhere. Most of the Buddhas are of a kind that would prevent their public exhibition outside of museums.

Next came the silk scrolls or tapestries—embroidered and painted curtains. The paintings are of Buddhas in brilliant reds and blues and yellows, the rich, vivid pigments showing bright against the ancient fabrics, which are of a finer weave than is manufactured anywhere today, and to the touch as soft as down. How old these tapestries are the Frenchmen did not know, but they must have been made many centuries ago. The manner of weave, the imperishable dyes, to say nothing of the symbolic meaning of the paintings and embroideries, are lost to mankind. Along with these tapestries were large posters made of paper in a most peculiar way. One was the figure of a priest of heroic size. It was made of strips of colored paper, each strip being about an eight of an inch wide. These strips were crossed and criss-crossed in a flat braid with the colors so arranged that the figure of the priest in colors resulted. I realize that I haven't described it accurately. As nearly as I can tell it was a paper mosaic. I had never seen anything like this before and I never heard

any one describe such a thing in any way.

The Frenchmen also brought down from the ancient land much fine porcelain—some very white, some ox-blood red and some brilliantly blue. They made much of these vessels, but as I am clearly at sea on the subject of ceramics I could not work up much interest except in two objects. One of these was a very large green pitcher of jade—a precious stone which is used as settings in rings in the Orient. The green pitcher, evidently part of the equipment of an altar, was the biggest piece of jade I have ever seen, and, of course, was priceless, probably the richest find of the explorers. The other object was a coffin made of porcelain. This was about four feet long and eighteen inches wide —evidently for a child—and highly ornamented.

Besides these curios, the travelers had picked up several ancient swords, the hilts and scabbards of which were studded with turquoise, the most commonly used jewel in Thibet.

There were, too, incense-burners of bronze without number and an ancient Thibetan kettle which caught my eye. This kettle was a large, graceful vessel, on Persian lines. It was of highly polished copper, heavily incrusted with silver. Its spout was a long, curved affair and its handle as delicately wrought as a high-priced ear-ring.

The Frenchmen who had corraled all these things purpose to dispose of them to museums in Europe. They didn't know about my early chromo experience, but they were infinitely patient with me while I examined each object.

But not until the last did I get my real thrill. What I had seen and what I have described were ancient, oriental and rare—just the things my chromo camels were laden with, no doubt—but there was nothing mysterious about any of it. And I wanted something mysterious. And I got it.

These travelers brought down from Thibet a lot of bronze and silver bells. They are the sweetest toned bells I have ever heard, and I was jingling them around like a real Chautauqua bell-ringer—when one of the Frenchmen held out to me two metal concave disks about three inches in diameter, each disk fastened to the end of a single small chain. He told me to strike the disks together. I did so and I had one of the surprises of my life. Imagine the purest note Kreisler ever drew from his violin, or Paderewski ever struck, or Melba ever reached and multiply it by a hundred and you will know what I heard—the most crystalline pure tone that ever sang out into the air. It was high and yet velvet, and it held like the rising note of a flute un-

til it filled the whole room with its music. Even the blue-eyed dog looked up from his bone and listened, and some twittering sparrows at the door grew silent. It seemed to challenge all nature by its perfection. I rang it again. I examined it. I carried it into open air and tried it there. The Frenchmen were just as excited about it as I was, and it was an old story with them. Was it the metal, or the shape, or the manner of casting which did this thing? They didn't know. It had come from a Thibetan temple. That was all they knew. But I knew that after years of listening to singers and players, and bands, orchestras and graphophones, I had heard, for the first time in my life, the perfect note.

XXVII

WAGES AND LIVING COSTS

FREQUENTLY you will hear someone in the United States say of the proprietor of a Chinese laundry: "When he makes a thousand dollars he will return to China and be rich the rest of his life." Is this true? Are the conditions of living in America and China so different that a comfortable balance in bank is a huge fortune in China?

The answer is yes. In elaborating on the cost of living, which I shall do, I wish you would keep in mind that I am overstating prices instead of understating them, not because I want to do so, but because I can't help it. No white man in China can secure the same price quotations that a Chinese can, and no rich Chinese can get the same quotations as a poor man. The traffic is charged what it will bear.

I should say that the average Chinese workman supports a family of six on a dollar a month. I will use gold prices entirely. Now

that twelve dollars a year looks impossible. It isn't in China, in this, the second year of the European war, with prices rising everywhere in the Occident.

In the first place, the Chinese workman eats little or no meat. He may get it on festival occasions, but day in and day out he has no acquaintance with flesh. He lives on vegetables cooked in vegetable oils, the oil being the source of his fat. The fowl which he has occasionally he raises himself, but he uses it sparingly. He goes slow on eggs, too. The Chinese eat twice a day.

In the second place, Chinese clothing is economical beyond belief. A workman's suit of blue cotton costs about fifty cents. His sandals will tax him four cents and his hat, if he goes in for hats, three cents, the whole outfit coming to something like sixty cents. Additional clothing for winter will raise this to a dollar. I would double this figure for his wife's outfit.

In the matter of furniture, an investment of a dollar will run the family for many years. I doubt if that much is expended by the average family. Fuel is high and used grudgingly. Rent I have not been able to size up. It is necessarily next to nothing.

It must be remembered that I am describing

a part of China where the climate is about that of central Texas, populated by a people the majority of whom have no drafts upon their resources by education, fashion or lure of creature comfort. The single big consideration in life to most of them is food. It is, in a Chinese way, wholesome provender. They enjoy it immensely, and, taken generally, the men are sinewy, strong and physically capable and the women fat and roly-poly.

In conveying to you prices of eatables it will be necessary for me to explain that bushels and pounds do not exist in China, and I have had to reduce the Chinese measurements to ours with some difficulty. Also you should understand that transactions here are in factions of a sixteenth of one of our cents, which will make a difference. And finally you must keep in mind that the prices I quote are those of the deep interior and were given to a foreigner and are in all instances overstated.

Rice (the very best for table use), 2 cents a pound.

Potatoes (Irish), 2 1-2 cents a pound.

Sweet potatoes, 12 cents a peck.

Tomatoes, 2 1-2 cents a pound.

Egg plant, 1 cent each.

Cabbage, 1 cent each.

String beans, 2 cents a pound.
Cucumbers, 1-2 cent each.
Spinach, 1 1-2 cents a basket.
Carrots, 2 1-2 cents a pound.
Green peppers, 1 cent for half peck.
Pumpkins, 2 cents each.
Peanuts, 4 cents a pound.
Onions, 1 1-2 cents a pound.
Oranges, 6 cents a dozen.
Lemons (imported), $1 a dozen.
Lemons (native), 25 cents a dozen.
Wheat flour, $1.25 for 50 pounds.
Eggs, 6 cents a dozen.

Of course, this list calls for some explanations. There are many grades of rice, and the bulk of the Chinese do not use the best, which I have quoted. The native lemon is large, larger than an orange. It is not so good as the California lemon, which the Chinese in Szechuan could easily grow if somebody started it for them. Wheat flour is as I have given it. It is ground by hand. No wheat is exposed for sale. Most of the bread eaten is in the shape of hot-cakes.

Tea, which is used in enormous quantities, can be obtained very cheaply. The very best—perfumed with jasmine blossoms—sells at 45 cents per pound. Coffee is not used.

This closes up the list of eatables entering

into the expenses of the average Chinaman and brings one to the meat situation. The richer Chinese do eat meat, and they have a picnic so far as prices are concerned. All cuts of beef are five cents a pound. This is for soup bones as well as roasts. The beef is really excellent—sweet and compact and well butchered. Pork is from three to four cents a pound. The Chinese pig—invariably the Poland China breed—is as good as you can find anywhere. Mutton sells for five cents a pound. It is really goat and is very palatable. Suet is seven cents a pound and lard, which is expensive, brings eighteen cents for the pound. A pair of calf brains cost thirteen cents.

It is really in the domestic and wild poultry field that China shines. I don't think there can be any place on earth where game is as palatable as it is in this part of China. I have been long a specialist on wild duck, but I have never had such duck. I don't know much about the real cause, but I suspect that the ducks feed wholly on celery and rice. The same quality holds on domestic fowl. And the prices are stunning. Here are some of them.

Chickens (fries), 10 cents each.

Chickens (full sized), 15 cents each.

Ducks (tame), 15 cents each.

Ducks (wild), 10 cents each.
Squabs, 5 cents each.
Wild Pigeons, 4 cents each.
Goose (tame), 40 cents each.
Partridge, 10 cents each.
Quail, 5 cents each.
Woodcock, 10 cents each.

There are no turkeys and I saw no wild geese for sale. While there are lots of deer, I found no venison. Frog legs sell for a cent a pair. The ducks are teal and mallard. Pheasants bring forty cents each.

Salt in China is sold by a monopoly. It is very high—eight cents a pound. Native sugar, unrefined (the old brown kind), brings three cents a pound, and the same refined is sold for six cents. Coal—and China is full of it—it just sticks out of the ground everywhere along the Yangtse sells in Chung-King for $4 a ton. Why, I can't make out. It ought to be less than a dollar. Wood is very high. China has neglected her forests and the market is bulled out of sight by the use of enormous coffins. Kerosene is forty-three cents a gallon and gasoline fifty cents.

What the Chinese pay the Chinese workman I could not find out—the wages vary too much. Here, however, is the servant list of one white

man's home which I picked up. It can be accounted exceedingly high as a wage scale.

Eight chair coolies, $2.25 a month each.
Water coolie, $2.25 a month.
House coolie, $2.50 a month.
No. 1 boy, $8 a month.
Cook, $10 a month.
Gardener, $2.50 a month.
Watchman, $3 a month.
Laundryman, $6 a month.
Charwoman, $1 a month.
Four seamstresses, $2.50 a month each.

Some people at home bat civilization around a good deal and talk about it being a failure. I can imagine some of these critics over in China and saying to me: "Now, what's the matter with these people? They're ignorant, of course, but they are happy, aren't they? And they are healthful, too, and contented. Why disturb all this with democratic notions? Why burden them with education? Why organize them for higher wages? Why introduce foolish clothes, and style, and bathtubs, and an appetite for office and a whole lot of foolish things that a republican form of government is sure to bring?" And I know just what I should answer: "The good Lord didn't intend that happiness should be the only thing in this world."

XXVIII

THE ROAD TO CHENG-TU

WHEN I was a boy I had a weakness for a time for reading certain books "through." I girded up my loins and attacked the Bible, for instance, and sailed along famously until I struck that "begat" chapter, which put me down and out for the time being. I tackled Baxter's "All Saints' Rest." I waded through "Don Quixote." I demolished E. P. Roe's "Barriers Burned Away." The next book to it on the shelf was Tennyson." I jumped into that. Now, the first poem in any well-regulated volume of Tennyson is "The Lady of Shalott." The poem itself is a paralyzer. It isn't long, but it is cryptic. I couldn't make out what was the matter with the lady. So I read it again. But I was as much up in the air as before. It was plain to me that the lady was in trouble, but I couldn't diagnose it. So I went through it a third time—again without result. Thereupon I passed up Tennyson. But the poet

left me an image—the image of a road along which passed a procession of men and women, knight and lady, yokel, beggar, squire, actor, all wending their way into the mists and the mysteries of the world over the hill and far away. This image naturally awakened my poetic instincts, and I tried the formula on our neighbourhood. It didn't work. The only thing similar to this procession in my town was a daily passenger train. It flashed by with such speed and with so little opportunity for seeing the passengers that I quit. Had these passengers only walked, I might have been a poet.

Nevertheless I have always kept an eye out for such a road as Tennyson described. I found it in China. It is the road from Chung--King to Cheng-tu. It awakened no poetic instinct in me, but it was a source of never-failing interest. I perched myself on the battlements and watched the cavalcade below me as it wound out of Tung Yuen Men (a city gate), through the endless graveyard, around the shabby, jumbled groups of temples, by struggling villages and into the mouth of the horizon which gobbled it.

Here comes the panting mail-carrier—bare-legged, rather ragged, too, with a straw hat as broad as the head of a bass drum. Across his shoulders is the vibrating bamboo pole, at either

end of it a little discolored wad of mail. He has come seventeen miles, the last relay on the ten-day journey from Cheng-tu. He pushes wayfarers side and screams at others, and altogether is a tremendous fellow in a tremendous hurry. He gets $3.50 a month—a detail Tennyson would have overlooked.

Just back of him is a group of frolicking children headed by a roly-poly Chinese girl of ten. She has a feathered wooden ball—a shuttlecock—and this she tosses into the air by striking it over and over again with the back of her heels, first one heel then the other. All Chinese children play this way, with a leg agility wonderful to behold.

Next appears a group of Chinese soldiers in dove-colored cotton uniforms—not unlike khaki—good sturdy fellows—frightfully young—with visored caps and above the visor a tinseled star—signifying nothing but merely decoration. They have a good military stride, a good military air. They would be first-rate soldiers, too, if you could take away from them the belief that the man who makes the most noise wins.

Now follows a line of chairs, the bearers shining in their sweat and screaming their signals. All the chairs are carefully closed. There are ladies of quality in the chairs and they are not

to be seen, being as isolated as Tennyson's lady herself. The lady of quality in China is the only creature in China who dresses in splendor, and then she cannot show off. I have been to several big entertainments in rich Chinese homes, and they show me all the children but the No. 1 wife, never.

There are other women to see along the Cheng-tu road, however—women of less importance, very dumpy women, very neat in their linen trousers, very black of hair, bobbing along on their stumpy feet and scarcely bending their knees at all, like boys on stilts. Here is a group of them in single file, their chubby yellow cheeks shaking as they jolt along.

They pass a file of blind beggars—five of them —and all of them young and pretty well clad and fairly clean. Each has a Chinese fiddle. Here comes a noisy caravan of coolies loaded with a little of everything imaginable—blankets, beds, bureaus, chairs, musical instruments, crockery, tinware, boxes, bundles and what not. A Chinese family is moving. This group is repeated scores of times, day in and day out, year after year. The Chinese are always moving. I wonder they have time for anything else.

But the row of coolies with shoulder poles who follow do not belong to this crowd. Instead

they are bringing chickens to market, the chickens cooped in baskets at the ends of the pole. And what is this row in their rear? It is a hog —a three hundred pounder—squealing his lungs loose. Four men have him. He is swung feet forward to the pole, and so he has come for miles and so he will go to the shambles.

This is followed by a most curious spectacle, for here seems to be moving in my direction the whole inside of a theatre. There is first an ornate Chinese house, curved roof and all, and then a lot of horses, house and horses all made out of pasteboard and paper. They are too big for toys and too small to live in or ride on. They are going to a funeral, or better, being carried; and the house will be set over the grave so that the spirit of the deceased will not want for habitation, and for exercise he can use the paper horses. It will be good for his spiritual liver.

My surmise is right, for eight men come grunting along with one of the huge Chinese coffins. On top of it, tied by the leg, is a rooster. He will be killed on the grave for the departed one's sustenance as he crosses the dark river.

On the heels of this funeral come four well-dressed Chinese slightly soused. Evidently they have been to a party and have had a gay time. They are getting away early for it is only three

in the afternoon. They are the first men showing signs of drink I have seen in China. They are just exhilarated, just noisy. One fat reveler stepped out in front of his fellows and made an assertion about his own courage—that is, he brandished his legs. When a white man boasts, he swells his chest out; when a Chinese gets gay he throws his legs around like a pitcher in a baseball game. It is most ridiculous to brandish the legs around in this way. It is as much as to say to your opponent: "You knock the chip off my shoulder and I'll run away so fast that you will be humiliated all your life for not having caught me."

While I was watching the exhilarated Chinese something was happening just below Tung Yuen Men, the gate. For half a mile the wall was covered with Chinese. Down in front of the wall was a soldier and standing near him a shaggy-headed man with his arms bound behind him. That whole neighborhood evidently had had word of the pending execution of this bandit. Everybody who could, lined up along the parapet—old and young of both sexes. How quiet they were! Was each one saying, "If it should have been I?" Was his mother there? Probably, waiting to claim his body. How there must have flashed hot through her soul her love

of him and her divine hate of society which was to sacrifice him! Why don't the executioners hurry? The condemned man himself was quite composed, but the crowd was in a perfect torture of silence. Down through the gate they come—ten soldiers, double file and very, very quickly. Ten gun shots, sounding like only three or four. Why should they have hurried so.? Another minute of sunlight would have meant so much to him! Very, very quickly the soldiers have marched away again. How very very flat a dead man is on the ground! How flat and shapeless! And how even the tiniest of the bawling beady-eyed Chinese babies there hushed as the shots rung out.

XXIX

CHINA'S GREAT ERROR

NEARBY our stopping place in Chung-King there is a bastion in the city wall. Viewed from the outside, it looks like a heavy square tower, overhanging a steep cliff. Inside it is a big, deep, ugly, inaccessible well. Just back of this well is a heavy platform of masonry, and on this masonry, flat, without wheels or carriage of any kind, is a big six-inch cannon.

This cannon is the sole defense of this city, which is about as big as St. Louis. Of course, the wall itself is a defense. It is strongly built and it is so placed that it overhangs everywhere declivities. There are eight gates to the city and they are banged shut every night at six. Anybody caught outside stays outside until morning. An infantry force, without artillery, could not take Chung-King in a year if the gates were protected. Against any sort of well-directed artillery the city would not stand ten

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From Asia, the American Magazine on the Orient

FAMOUS YEH-TAN RAPIDS AT LOW WATER

minutes' real bombardment without capitulating.

The cannon to which I have alluded, could not be fired. It is not mounted, its bore is closed with dirt, and its firing-vent rusted shut. There are no cannon-balls for it. It must be two hundred years old and it has not been fired probably for a hundred.

I never looked at this old cannon without reflecting again on the mystery of the colossal inability of the Chinese to fight. What is the matter with them? I have been trying to find the answer.

To begin with you have to eliminate a lot of ordinary explanations. First, the Chinese are not cowards. Second, they are not serfs, for they believe they are superior to the white people. Third, they are capable of organized action. That is, the Chinese people have courage, pride and capacity for concentrated and concerted activity—just those qualities which hold together the great armies in Europe. What is it they lack?

For they certainly lack something. If a good sized army of bandits should suddenly appear before Chung-King, a contingency not at all impossible any time, and demand the surrender of the city, the chances are that a few rich Chinese would put up a lot of money and buy the town

off. They would not fight. In the same way, if the United States should do something which greatly offended the Chinese, there would be no talk of war on us, but almost universally the Chinese would begin to boycott American goods, and they can make a boycott bull-strong and hog-tight. The Chinese army is quite an organization. I have seen a good deal of it. It is well-drilled, well-clad, and well-armed. It can shoot straight. But it won't fight. Time after time in the revolutions which have set up and maintained the young republic, opposing armies marched valiantly up to each other, spread out in battle array, and then politely arranged terms of peace.

Nine out of ten people who read this will say that the Chinese were afraid. But they were not afraid. They simply did not want to fight.

I have heard people try to explain the mystery by declaring that the official Chinese religion, Confucianism, which is not a religion at all, but a philosophy, makes for an extreme utilitarianism—that the Chinaman about to fight argues that there can be in a blood-spilling contest only great loss. But it is not a sense of utilitarianism which makes the Chinese noncombatant. No nation on earth is as quick to take a risk as China. No people is as idolatrous

of material wealth, but no people ever has or ever will gamble with it as do the Chinese. Everybody gambles.

No, the explanation is not there. The Chinaman, as a human machine, is equipped just as the American, the European, the Japanese, the Indian, the Afghan, the Abyssinian, or anybody else. He is not lacking in any fighting qualities. But he is lacking one vital fighting method. That is the solution of the mystery.

Through centuries of isolation and self-sufficiency the Chinese have come to believe in the entire virtue of the elements of defense. Everywhere else in the world a man who believes he is about to be annihilated will himself take the offensive, for in that situation the only effective defense is in offensive action. The Chinese, however, argue it out this way. The stronger position is in holding your forces in reserve, keeping a cool head, conserving your energy and letting your opponent waste his energy and take the risks of attack. That is, when the other fellow attacks, the Chinese recedes. Now China has always been able to recede. Her territories have been vast, her neighbors, until recently, indifferent. If she had been crowded into a corner in the past she would have just as much initiative today as Japan has developed. And

the world might have seen historical repetition of the Hun visitation in Rome, long since. But China has so long believed in the defensive attitude of mind that it is doubtful if anybody short of a Hannibal or a Napoleon could bring her to the other view.

For centuries China was left alone. Between an aggressive Europe and herself were vast territories held by semi-savages. Between the new aggressive American and herself was a great waste of water. Japan was not awake.

Japan did awake. She adopted modern devices. She introduced machinery. She set up the factory. She established joint stock companies. She discovered she was cramped for room. The first thing she kicked overboard was her sense of isolation. Japan didn't want to do this. She liked isolation. She didn't want to mix with the rest of the world. But once she was convinced that her isolation had slipped away from her, she threw the memory overboard. It is one of the hardest and most heroic things on earth to do.

When Japan had made away with her tradition about isolation she took the bull by the horns and did another astonishing thing—she adopted the offensive attitude of mind. Japan had been just as defensive in her attitude as

China. She had counted on her insular security as much as England ever did. She believed that the way to avoid trouble was to convince the world that she didn't want trouble, and to that end she intended to avoid it. But now Japan argued that if isolation was a thing of the past, the old defensive attitude of mind was a dangerous thing to have around the house. So she flopped right over and took the other side of the argument.

There is only one rule in a fight and it has always been the same. Alexander used it, so did Caesar, so did Napoleon, so did Grant. Their idea was this: "If it's got to be a fight, pick the other fellow's weak spot, pick it quick, get all your strength ready, and hit him first." This is the first and last lesson in defense. I don't know how far Japan will get with this device, but it is what she is using in the Orient, and up to date it is working well. First, she laid China out cold. She then walloped Russia so suddenly that the war was over before Russia scarcely understood that it had begun. Somebody may say: "Isn't Japan likely to overdo the offensive thing?" That is possible. For while the defensive attitude can overcome a nation with dry-rot, the offensive attitude also can quickly break its neck. Whenever a nation or a man goes in on

an offensive campaign for the sheer love of offense, it is good night for him. History is full of examples of that. Besides, common sense proves it must be so.

But while offense is a dangerous state of mind, the defensive attitude of the Chinese is worse—for the end is in deep humiliation. This, indeed, is the biggest lesson the Chinese must learn. If they are to keep their republic; indeed, if they are to retain the integrity of their country under any form of government this side of vassalage, they must subscribe to a doctrine which the world will some day outlive, but which it is dangerous to forget now, that is, if another nation has a gun which will carry ten thousand yards, you cannot protect your nation with a gun that carries only nine thousand, and further, if you and your opponent have each ten-thousand-yard guns, that your opponent be given to understand that yours is ready and that you have spent money training your gunners to be swift and accurate.

One day I was looking the old cannon over again on the bastion and a little Japanese passed, paused, looked the gun over and smiled. You couldn't blame him. And you couldn't help blaming the Chinese. For it would be better for the Chinese to have no cannon at all than

to have this, for the old gun, as indeed old China herself, with all her disabilities, loomed in my mind suddenly as an unholy invitation to aggression, insult, humiliation and destruction.

Will the Republican form of government sensitize China to this new national need? The answer is in the laps of the gods. The best guess is the affirmative one. Imperialism can swallow an insult and live. A democracy can not, and China is set on remaining a democracy.

XXX

CITIES THAT NEVER DIE

YOU meet a Chinese and ask: "How old is your town?" He takes on the same look he would have if you had asked him the shape of the nose of his great-great-grandfather. Apparently he never thought of it before. He usually answers that the town has been here for a long time. And he is right—it has.

Now, an interesting feature of the republic of China is that you can find towns in every possible stage of growth and decay. You can find old cities which are taking on new life, towns that have become cities in a century, once populous centers that are still populous, yet are all but forgotten, and villages that haven't changed size in four thousand years.

Chung-King is an instance in point. The chances are that there has been a city here for a couple of thousand years, although I am guessing at that. It could not have been much of a place commercially until the white man got a

steamer up the Yangtse beyond the Gorges. It began to boom then, and it is booming still. If the Americans ever build their railroad up the river, it will become the Chicago of China. Now, across the river from Chung-King is a big walled city called Kiang-peh. It is as dead as a door nail. It doesn't like foreigners. The people over there murdered the first American missionary who appeared and threw his body over the wall. It isn't growing. It is dying now. Two thousand years from now it may be booming.

Shanghai is a big, spanking city on the coast as full of business as a dog is of fleas. It was a fishing village a century ago. Not so far away from Shanghai is the city of Hangchow. It was founded along about 600 A. D. In the next six hundred years Hangchow became the "Queen City of the Orient," a sort of "Peerless Princess of the Plains." It was the center of things in art, literature and commerce. Marco Polo went wild over the beauties and business of this city. In the course of centuries the town waned in importance and was finally burned in a rebellion. It is slowly rebuilding, but you hear precious little of its importance in China now.

On the road from Hankow to Peking is the city of Kaifeng. It has been the capital of the

country several times. When the Manchus invaded China they took Kaifeng after a long, hard siege. They then cut the levees of the Yellow river and flooded the town, drowning a hundred thousand people. Little is heard of Kaifeng at the present time by the outside world, and that little is in connection with the attempt of a colony of Hebrews to get foothold in China. After the persecution of the Jews in Babylon, it is believed that a colony set out for the far east and settled at Kaifeng. This colony grew in numbers and importance for centuries. It built a splendid synagogue and numbered seventy clans. Its prosperity came to an end about two hundred years ago, and in 1870 only seven of the seventy clans remained, the total number of persons in these seven clans being two hundred. Their religion and their race have fallen into decay. They intermarried with the Chinese and lost their racial distinction, and it is said that only one feature of the Jewish religion survives—abstention from pork.

Another ancient capital of China is the city of Sianfu. This town was flourishing before Rome got on its feet. It was the seat of an old emperor named Shih-hwang-ti, who, two hundred years before Christ, earned the everlasting condemnation of all historians by a fool act.

China had kept pretty good historical records up to that time—the oldest in the world. This old codger ordered them all burned on the theory that, with the records out of the way, he would be remembered as the first ruler of China. However, Sianfu, though its population is a million, is of little importance to-day to the outside world, the chief interest in it centering in the fact that the Nestorian Christians located here about five hundred years after Christ. Nestorius was a Christian priest at Antioch who fell out with the church authorities over some doctrinal matter. He picked up a colony and set out for China, having among his following one negro. For centuries these Christians survived and battled away against the inborn paganism of the Chinese. Several hundred years ago they prepared a tablet telling of the glories of Christianity and set it up at Sianfu. It is still in existence. The Nestorians disappeared from China long since, although when Marco Polo crossed the country he found many of them.

Of all the cities of China which evidence the ebb and flow of the tides of fortune, Nanking is easily first. It has now a population of four hundred thousand, but its walls show that in the past it has accommodated many times this

number of people. For the walls now take in farms and fields, in the midst of which are found big bridges which formerly were parts of streets over which there was immense traffic. Nanking has been besieged in nearly every period of the country's history. War has swiped it with great regularity down through the centuries. It again came into prominence through the circumstance that the new republic was proclaimed there.

Between Hankow and Peking, far off main-traveled roads, is the city of Chenchow. It is the oldest city in China. It started in 3000 B. C. Here silk was invented in 2500 B. C. by a woman, her name being Yuen-fi. She was one of the wives of the third emperor. Invention ran in the family, for the old man himself, Hwang-ti, introduced carts and boats. Man, who scoots around in automobiles and steamships, has improved the cart and the boat some in four thousand years, but silk is the same. China produces about two hundred million dollars worth a year, and the world's demand exceeds the supply. Chenchow is little known, and I have found no one who has ever been there. Another town in southern China is entitled to a place in history. It is called Zayton. Satin was invented there, it is claimed.

Between Chung-King and Shanghai is the city of Ching-teh-chen, the center of the porcelain craft. It is now and it always has been apparently. The Chinese invented porcelain. They had the potter's wheel two thousand years before Christ. But porcelain under the name of china was not known to the outside world for many centuries afterward. The zenith of this town's career was in Marco Polo's day, when two hundred thousand artisans were employed in making china there. Trade has fallen off, but Ching-teh-chen remains the center of it.

But whether trade flourishes or fades away, whether wars come or peace lingers, the Chinese cities remain cities. Western Asia and Africa are full of mounds of dust that once were the temples and palaces of men and women who lived, labored and loved. Nineveh, Babylon, Palmyra, Carthage and Thebes are as dead as an automobile out of gas on a muddy road on a dark night.

For some mysterious reason Chinese cities survive all destruction. The historian Macauley talked about the day when the antiquarian from Australia would stand upon a grass-grown heap in England and say: "This was London." That is all right. It will probably come to pass in the fullness of time. But when the Australian

is thinking over the glories of the British metropolis in the misty, mighty past it will be a dead sure shot that the town of Chung-King, China, will be just as crowded, just as dirty, just as smelly as it is to-day and as it was two thousand years ago.

XXXI

THE CHINESE PRINTER

IT naturally occurred to me to call on the editor in Chung-King. I didn't expect to create a panic. But I did. There are three daily newspapers in Chung-King—that is, they are daily occasionally. Every once in a while your paper will quit coming for a week and you will ask the carrier why and he will say: "Paper stopped for a while. Run out of money."

I selected the paper called Min Tsu Pao—that is, "The Newspaper of the People Awake." Now, I didn't know at the time that there had been a lot of excitement in newspaper circles the previous week. There had been, just the same. There is a general here named Hsua, a little roly-poly Chinese who is a pretty good fellow. The previous week the editor of "The Newspaper of the Strong Heart" wrote a piece calling Hsua a lot of names. Hsua went up in the air like a candidate for county commissioner in his first campaign. The oftener Hsua read the editorial

the more he wanted to lick the editor. But he didn't. He compromised. He closed the "Strong Heart" paper up. Now, the "People Awake" republished that editorial before it knew Hsua was hot. Down Hsua came on the "People Awake," and he made Rome howl, finally agreeing to fine the "People Awake" twenty dollars. Now, I didn't know this. So when I appeared with my interpreter at the office of the "People Awake" there was a stampede. I must have looked like an irate subscriber.

The office of the "People Awake" is in an old temple. This is strictly Chinese. Temples in China are used for pretty nearly everything except for worship. They hold markets in them, use them for hotels, quarter soldiers in them; and it was natural for the "People Awake" to do business alongside three big gold Buddhas sitting in solemn silence in a sea of cobwebs. When I appeared there were about ten newspaper men standing out in front of the office just "mooning" in an abstract way Chinese have. When they saw me these men made a dash for the door and disappeared like the rear of a red-ball freight train around a curve. I followed up, however, and, as there are no doors in China, I cornered the whole force. It was all right when they saw I wasn't mad—that I couldn't even

read Chinese, and was seeking light, not gore.

The chief editor, Mr. Yen, conducted me into a small room, and I took a seat along the wall. This wouldn't do at all. I had to have the throne seat—a high seat in the center. Then a servant brought tea and rice cakes. This tea business always happens. After it was over I interviewed the whole crowd. They have three writers on the "People Awake." They do not go out after the news, but wait until the police send it in. Then they write it and send it with the telegraph over to the printer. They get a small telegraph service from Peking. How do they send the Chinese characters by wire? It is simple. They give every word in the dictionary a number and then wire the numbers. These telegrams are translated and sent to the printer. When the last bit of copy is sent to the printer in America the writer puts on the last sheet "thirty." Here they put the Chinese characters for "finished." The paper is off the press at six o'clock in the morning and is delivered by five carriers, who finish their job by two o'clock in the afternoon. These carriers get $1.50 a month. I asked the writers a lot of direct questions. Their answers were almost always indirect, for Chinese do not answer until they have guessed what you are trying to get

them to answer. Then their disposition is to avoid giving information. You can't blame them, for my questions were leading. "What did they think of Japan?" They thought Japan might be of great help to China. "Would Japan and the United States ever fight, in their opinion?" They answered, "Probably not." Would the Chinese Republic last? They hoped so. Did they favor the re-election of the present president of China for another term of five years? They did. Were the people of China in favor of the Allies or the Germans? The Chinese people didn't care who won, but everybody hoped the war would soon end. Were the people interested in news about the war? At first the people were, but they were not any longer. They were tired of it.

I got one of the reporters to steer me over to the printers. This is an establishment where all the papers are set up and printed. I could catch the smell of printer's ink, over all the other smells of China, a block off. The foreman of this shop was a tall, lean printer with a bright eye. He led me to a little room, made me take the throne seat and served me tea. He was bubbling over with a piece of news, and he let me have it. Two Chinese girls, Wah Yaw Chen and Chua Fe, had been to him that morning to

know if he could print a daily paper for them. They were about thirty years of age, apparently unmarried, had been educated in Japan and were of the middle class, and they wanted to start the paper to push the cause of equal suffrage in Chung-King. The printer thought this was about the funniest thing in the world—and if you knew Chung-King you would think so, too.

The foreman took me at once out into the composing room. The first thing that struck me were the printers—rather their manner. They were absolutely indifferent to my presence—in true printer style. Everywhere else in this part of China a man in our dress causes a cessation of business. People follow you on the street in droves, trying to figure out how you make your clothes stay on. But the printers ignored me. Each wore a hat with a black button on top and worked in a little room made of three upright cases reaching from the floor to a point above his head. The type compartments are about an inch square, and contain about six types. These types are nicked the same as our old hand type. A single case contains about ten thousand characters. The printers use a "stick," just as we do, but no "rule," and their work was quite rapid. The Chinese memory, and this big type case makes it hump, all right, is really uncanny.

Memory with us is a lost art. I watched some distributors at work, and found that they distribute "dry." This is all right, for the types are shoved into the compartments, not dropped. The printers work different periods of time—some ten hours, some twelve, some fifteen. They are paid on a basis of length of service. A new man gets $5 a month; the oldest man in the establishment draws $10 a month—big wages in this part of China. A small, slant-eyed imp washed the type. But they have no designation for him, and they didn't understand why we called him "the devil" in America. The type is set in columns of about fifteen "ems." They call it "two thumbs," but it is no more the length of two thumbs than a foot in our measurement is the length of a man's foot. The most striking thing about a Chinese print shop is that it is necessary to make the type in the shop. This is because of the Chinese language. It has so many characters that it would be practically impossible to keep a full font on hand all the time. Some high-brow editor is liable to swing into the office with a letter that hasn't been used more than twice in the last hundred years. It is necessary to get that letter, so the Chinese make it. In a room off the composing room they have several type-casting machines.

These machines are easily the best pieces of mechanism in the shop. They cost about one hundred dollars. Like the presses, they are are manufactured in Shanghai.

The presses themselves are marvels. There were two, and they were little dumpy, flat-bed concerns—just one degree above a Washington hand press. One man feeds, another man takes the printed sheet away and a third man attends to the ink rollers. The presses were literally swimming in oil and looked like they hadn't been rubbed off for a year.

While watching the presses I considered the fact that there are in this province of China nearly as many people as there are in the United States; that it wouldn't be such a tremendous miracle if a tenth of them in the next half century got the reading habit, and that the newspaper field which offered ten million readers would be some field.

And I was dead sure of this: If that miracle could happen, not in fifty years, but in five years, as a miracle should, and "The Newspaper of the People Awake" could be read by fifty thousand people, instead of by its present eight hundred, there would be no question about the future of the Chinese republic.

XXXII

A CERTAIN RICH MAN IN WANHSIEN

IT has been my desire to describe to you a rich man in China. I have various reasons back of the desire. First, I wanted to make some comparisons with the things we read in romance and the Chinese films we see at the movies. Next I wanted to offer something in China not touched with dire poverty or the thing which is worse—hungry avarice. And, lastly, I wanted to preach a little sermon about Mammon.

On the first score, I can vindicate the movies and cannot the written romances. The rich Chinese I have seen in the movies are very true to life. The rich Chinese of romance are mostly inventions. The rich Chinese I am to describe is not avaricious—he has all that money can buy except more money, and that he doesn't want. I will leave the sermon to the last.

When I arrived at the city of Wanhsien, I followed in the footsteps of a friend, who knew

what I wanted, through the ancient town and over a very high arched bridge, in crossing which you go upstairs and downstairs, the bridge being as two stairways propped up against each other. We met long processions of Chinamen carrying on shoulder poles big conical cakes of indigo each about the size of a pumpkin. We also passed several wedding processions, this being a "lucky day" and much chosen. I did not see the bride in any instance, for she was always tucked away in the big red chair as she bobbed along to meet the sweetheart she does not see until the nuptial day.

My friend and I were bound for the palace of Mr. Yang. We found it on a beautiful hill, hidden in a grove of cedars. Above and beyond it loomed a rocky, almost inaccessible and wholly impregnable crag, around the top of which is a high wall—a city of refuge. In the distance the city of Wanhsien, with its curved roofs and colored temples, swam, fairy-like, in the afternoon sunlight. The scene was ideal—a mixture of pastoral and medieval—the frowning fortress and the peaceful valley. It was all Chinese. There are only six white folks there.

Our Chinese chair coolies knocked at the great gate again and again, but there was no response. It was explained to me that possibly Mr. Yang

had gone up to the city of refuge, where he spent much of his time since the bandits had become troublesome. All the rich lived up there. The gate was finally opened by a genial, well-clad Chinese, who led us into a great enclosure, up a flight of steps to a second gate which opened at his knock, heavily, creakily, and spread before us a big garden and back of it a long palace made up of a main building with two wings. The wall of the house first interested me. It carried near its top a wide border in porcelain —blue, red and yellow. The border was divided into scenes, traditional and historical. I had a chance to study one of these scenes while we waited for our host—it showed a Chinese in very ancient attire playing a blue flute. Out of the end of the flute flew a purple flame-like ladle, and on this ladle three Chinese girls were dancing—that is, they were dancing, not to his music, but on it.

After we had waited a bit we were taken into another reception room. Walls, stairways, chairs—everything was ornate, not gaudily, but with rich and curious carvings of figures or flowers—much of it in sandstone. A servant brought to us the son of the family—a boy of ten—very modest, in plain black silk with the black silk skull cap common in China well down

over his chubby face. The boy was very well-mannered and without nervousness, making his bows without self-consciousness. With this youngster and a retinue of servants we passed on through the palace to an interior garden in which stood a high, fancifully carved, sandstone teahouse with two roofs—there had been three, it was explained to me, but when a workman mending a roof had fallen and hurt himself, Mr. Yang took one of the roofs off. Here we were joined by the host, Mr. Yang. He is a little, thin, bright-eyed Chinese with a quick smile. He was clad in a plain brown silk gown with a skull cap of the same color. When I pressed him through the interpreter he told me his family had been in the cotton fabric business in Wanhsien for two hundred years. His home had cost him one hundred thousand dollars. He had lost all his children save this one son. It was plain that his whole life was wrapped up in this boy. If he should die—and that is the constant thought in this household—the line would pass, and that would mean that not only Mr. Yang himself, but all his ancestors would be uncared for.

I began to see the tragedy of this palace then. The sum of all its happiness pivoted on this child—riches, luxury, gain, and all that desire

planned or ambition craved were as nothing compared with the besetting fear that the boy would not live. There was no emphasis upon the point by the father except in his constant watch over the child. Together we wandered about over the garden and into the little rooms which surrounded it—a library with a litter of Chinese books, lounging rooms, tea-rooms and a drinking room with a legend over the entrance. "One hundred rooms"—that is, the drinkers could go their length—there were plenty of beds here—they needn't think of going home. There was nothing of revealed or concealed pride, no hint of boastfulness in Mr. Yang's manner as he showed us about. As a matter of fact, he let one of the servants—he has thirty—do most of the leading, while he loitered behind with us and the little boy. We did not go into the wing where the family lived, and I have to register, as all travelers to China must, that you do not see the wives of rich men.

Eventually we rounded up in a little tearoom. Mr. Yang took no pains to seat his guests according to precedent, a thing the white people in China guard jealously, as do most of the Chinese, the white people putting the guest of honor at the right, the Chinese theirs to the left. Evidently this social gew-gaw had never reached

Mr. Yang, or if it had, he didn't care for it.

Mr. Yang had never been to the coast. He had never been to Peking. His personal knowledge of the world is confined to Szechuan. He read no newspapers or magazines. His servants poured the tea, scented with jasmine blossoms, and set out little, round, sweet cakes, and everybody, Chinese fashion, waited for the host to take the first sip. Evidently this custom did not cling strongly in Mr. Yang's memory, for he was interested in conversation and let the tea grow cold. After the tea the servants brought the hot towels. These were scented delicately, and the host mopped his face with one vigorously, and with disregard of the act as a polite custom.

The man was hungry for company. He pressed us, not in politeness, but genuinely, to pass the night with him. The boy was as eager. He, too, young as he was, craved the chance of interruption to their deadly monotony. So when they bowed us out through the big carved gates it was with real regret that we were to leave them so soon.

Now, for the sermon. I carried away with me as we left the shadows of the crowded cedars and followed the narrow, shining road out into the shadows of the night the old lesson again

that of all things wealth is the weakest. Here was a new view of an old truth, however. The possession of wealth here was ideal. It had expended itself in the creation of a fairyland home. It was not hampered by ambition or avarice. In this case wealth had not subjected itself to the tortures of envy or emulation. It had removed from the life of its possessor all thought of strife, either to retain it or increase it. People say very frequently in the midst of the moil and toil of living: "If I had a million, I would build a beautiful home away from everybody and everything. I would take my own out into a beautiful walled garden and there, alone with my flowers and birds and my loved ones, I would throw away all that cramps the soul and pinches the heart and narrows the mind. I would be rich in myself, my books, my thoughts, my family and in my own." That is, they would turn themselves into happy, luxurious hermits. It sounds well. But there is nothing in it. For when a man has built his home and got all his own within it he has left his dearest possession outside the walls—the world itself. For I could not help reflecting as I passed through the palace and found all the clocks recording different time and all of them hours slow that the only thing which keeps any

of us in spiritual order is the old rantankerous, jostling, hustling, double-fisted, hob-nailed world, which, after all, is cruel only to be kind.

One of our greatest debts is to Xantippe. Had she been amiable, Socrates would have hung around the house and turned insipid. She chased him out among the cobblers, the butchers and the bakers and produced a wisdom against which the world has been whetting it wits ever since.

XXXIII

THE EVIL SPIRIT OF THE YANGTSE

WHEN the devil was thrown head-long and head-first out of heaven he landed in the Yangtse river. This is neither an historical fact nor a Chinese legend. It is my private opinion, and this is the way I feel about it. The stream has so many demoniacal sides that it never could have acquired them except by personal contact with the Old Man himself.

Moreover, I think that the devil not only landed in the Yangtse, but I am virtually convinced that he liked the valley so well that he has stayed. Of course, he may take a trip occasionally, such as one to start a drouth in Australia or a war in Europe, but his old home place is the dear old rantankerous, rebellious, man-strangling, boat-wrecking, boiling, boisterous Yangtse.

You don't really see the Yangtse as the devil's own at first. You are apt to stand un-

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HSIEN-TAN RAPIDS, UPPER YANGTSE, AT LOW LEVEL STAGE

der an awning on the upper deck and exclaim over the wonders of the curling waters and the beauties of the careening junks. With the gorgeous mountains all about and the green fields and the blue sky, it all seems a bit of heaven. But you get over that as you come to know the Yangtse. Knowledge begins with the "floaters," the dead people who are whirled around in the current—the women corpses always face up, the men corpses face down. You increase your real insight into affairs when you have seen several drown before your eyes, all of them horribly sucked down out of sight as though the devil himself had hold of their legs. A man usually has a floundering, fighting chance to stay afloat, even at sea, but no chance at all in the Yangtse—plump! and he is gone forever. And you come to know what a monster the river is when you find the modern steamers piled up at the foot of the gorges with broken shafts, shattered propellors and busted boilers—at the end of the season, cripples every one. They say that the Yangtse drowns a thousand a year. It is a rank guess. Nobody has any statistics on it—ten thousand may be nearer the mark. Up and down its banks on either side from Hankow to Chung-King are shrines to the river gods. On the rocks in the center of the stream, visible at

low water, are more gods carved in the stone—gods that take care of the drowned people beneath the surface in high water and of the live ones on top in low water. Along the shore from one end of the country to the other are long banners to indicate that someone was drowned off this point yesterday or the day before. And once in a while a light will be found at the water's edge, burning perpetually, in aid of some poor soul who has been sucked down. At Ichang one day every year they set loose thousands of little colored paper boats, each containing burning oil, and let them float in a flock down the swirling waters for the dead.

So everybody gets to look upon the Yangtse with the respect which is really not respect at all, but calloused dread. You come to understand that if you accidentally step off the deck and hit the water you might as well write "approved by the national board of censors" after your life and call it quits. For it is quits. The newcomer will cross the river at night in a sampan and pay the extra price with glee over the adventure. The old stager prefers to stay on this side of the river until daybreak, even if he has to sleep on a rock. Indeed, if you stay long enough in this part of China you will come finally into the belief that the Yangtse is laying for

you—and that it will get you sooner or later.

For surely, if slowly, the Yangtse ceases to be a river and becomes a personality—a murderous, clutching fiend with a tiger's taste for blood. Captain Brandt of the Shu-Hun, who plies between Ichang and Chung-King, told me that during the seven months of navigation on the upper river there were really seven rivers. Every month presented a new set of problems and put some new and unexpected drag on the machinery. Consequently after you had a little experience with the stream you quit standing on deck and glorying in the scenery. You drop aft and look down in the engine room, where the engineer stands, wrench in hand, sweating like an ice pitcher in July and cursing the piston and eccentrics to the full power of his profanity.

With most white men the last stage of acquaintance with the Yangtse is to regard it as a personal enemy. Not so with the Chinese They have known the Yangtse for a matter of four thousand years—grandfather, father, son, this trinity multiplied a thousand times. And to the Chinese the Yangtse is not merely a person; it is a super-person. It is, in truth, the devil himself, a powerful, cunning, treacherous entity which is both Man and Thing, a sleepless, aggressive, soul-devouring monster.

It is no easy matter for a white man to get the mental curve which turns a Thing into a Person, and that person the devil. The Chinese do it easily. In fact, about the only place the devil really survives is in China. He is on the job here. Everywhere else he has become a figure of speech expressing an element..

Now the devil in China is not an element, he is a person. He is not a superstition here; he is a reality. He has vigor, cunning and indefatigability. He also has his weaknesses, and because of this fact the devil keeps the Chinese almost as busy as he is himself. For, because of these weaknesses, the Chinese is always trying to beat the devil. For one thing, the devil cannot stand light. He cannot travel in a crooked line. The light idea is rational. Evil shuns the sun and revels in the dark. Occident or Orient. But the crooked line scheme is complex. For evil with us is as full of curves as a bull snake. Nine out of ten people who sin wouldn't have done anything of the kind if evil had attacked them directly. Those who fall are tricked by the devious and seductive approaches of evil. If Sin were frank in its attacks it would be ugly and easily repulsed. But Sin is often indirect and alluring and is not easily identified and so speedily put down. The devil with us is a sly

side-stepper. With the Chinese he is as straight as a steel bullet. Consequently when a Chinaman who has relations with the devil is not lighting joss sticks to keep him away he is traveling a crooked path to beat him out. No road, street or path in China is straight. Before virtually every door is a protective stone screen, some of those before temples being massive tablets.

Now this wouldn't be so very interesting if the devil in China was as he is with us, an unpleasant and rather grotesque tradition. But in China, in the minds of the Chinese he actually exists, and, moreover, he is a demon for work. There are millions of Chinese who are not religious except in their respect for his Satanic majesty. There are plenty of Chinese who scoff at all religious, their own included. They will laugh at their own superstitions, as we do at "Friday" and "thirteen," but, put to the test, the Chinaman knuckles in short order before the devil.

For instance, the first officer of our boat brought aboard a couple of vultures which he had shot. The Chinese quartermaster, a rather pleasant and intelligent young man, greedily gouged out the eyes of the birds and ate them "because they would make his eyes very keen."

While I was trying to keep my dinner down, the captain explained to me that the Chinese sailors believed it, just as they believed that eating the heart of a tiger raw would make them brave. Then the captain said: "The mysterious part of it is that intelligence or ignorance does not enter into the proposition. A Chinese cringes before his supersition. Take my steward. You cannot deny his intelligence. He speaks English like a statesman and writes beautiful Chinese. He reads a lot and in his way is quite a philosopher. I don't believe he has any religion. I suspect him of Atheism. On one of my trips things went wrong. The coal didn't steam and we lost time. We had trouble with the gear in a rapid. Everything got at sixes and sevens. I guess we all lost our tempers. Now I wasn't surprised at the coolie sailors deciding that a bad joss pidgin was at work on the ship and I didn't give their firecrackers astern a second thought, but when I dropped aft and found my philosopher steward in his room burning joss sticks to beat the band it rather shocked me. Of course, the steward was sheepish about it, and hadn't expected me to know of his antics. But afterward, when the troubles cleared up, I joshed him about his incense burning and he wouldn't say anything. What do I make of it?

Well, I can't call it religion. I would say that it was an attempt to circumvent bad luck. Luck is an odd thing anyway, and we are not onto its curves.

For example this incident which I witnessed: The Yangtse was boiling viciously below Ye Tan rapid. The wash kicked up by the steamer's screws had kept the junks and market boats in its wake bobbing all along the route. The wash is dreaded by all the boatmen. Their invariable tactics consist of throwing the boat head-on or stern-on into the wash and so riding the waves. Just below Ye Tan an old man at the rudder of a long market boat full of pigs swung his prow towards the steamer, but a whirlpool in the rapids whirled him viciously out of position and brought him broadside on just as the rolling waves caught him. Ordinarily the waves come separately with an interval between. The old man rode the first wave successfully. Then the second and third waves struck his boat virtually together and he and his two sons and his cargo went quickly down beneath the surging current. Did the drowning Chinese blame the steamer? No. Or the water? No. But the two waves together which did the business —that was their destruction, and that was the devil.

XXXIV

THE COURAGE OF CASTE CONVICTION

THIS is the story of King Chow. I do not think there is another story just like it in the world. I don't believe that it will remind you of anything you have ever read before. As a rule when you mention something you guess to be novel somebody can draw a parallel instance out of history. I am content to let any historian do his worst. I am satisfied that the experience of King Chow, as the French Commissioner at Shasi told it to me, cannot be matched.

King Chow is a city that is dying of dry rot. It is situated five miles from Shasi. Shasi is a river port built on a long dike which sweeps back from the Yangtse and encircles a big tract of land and protects it from overflow. In the midst of this enclosed area stands the once beautiful city of King Chow. It dominated this part of the world for a good many generations. Its palaces were models for the emulation of the

rich and powerful for many leagues; its treasures of lacquer and filigreed silver, its stores of embroidered fabrics at once the envy and the despair of the great valley of the interior. To all the population, generation after generation, its frowning walls spelled power, pride, dominion and divine right. For King Chow was the seat of the Manchus. When the strong men from the north took possession of China they established their own garrisons throughout the country. King Chow was one of these. The Manchu clans, called "bannermen," prospered and multiplied. They did not mix with the Chinese. They did not intermarry with the Chinese. The Chinese were the subject race. By Manchu edict, the Chinese wore pigtails, and however proud a Chinese became of his decoration no Manchu ever let him forget it was a badge of servitude. And if a Chinaman cut off his pigtail, the Manchus supplemented the job by cutting off his head. The Manchu man kept the strapping size of his ancestors. He was bigger, brawnier than the natives—and he never was and never could be Chinese. He is still a bigger man than the native and he has refused to become Chinese.

The Manchu woman aristocrat was undoubtedly the highest caste in the world. Europe has

had its dukes and duchesses, Turkey its khedives, India its Brahmins and we have our plutocrats. They all convince themselves in a very considerable degree that they are superior to the run of humanity. In my time I have seen a good deal of them first and last. Either on the score of money or manners or birth, or all of them together, these people believe they are of superior clay. Mostly they get away with the proposition. The general run of folk acknowledge it. But the Manchu woman had all the established aristocrats of the world beaten. She was, first of all, the only aristocrat who was superior to fashion. Other aristocrats set the fashion. The Manchu woman did not. She monopolized it. The average Chinese girl underwent the tortures of feet binding, because without the small feet, her chances of marriage were reduced. The Manchu woman never bound her feet. The Chinese woman has worn ill-shapen trousers from time immemorial. The Manchu woman kept to the concealing charm of the graceful skirt. The Chinese woman has always been subjected to a severely trying coiffure, her hair being plastered down over her head in a way that exaggerates her cheek bones and forehead. The Manchu woman affected an elaborate hair dressing that made her face both

notable and strikingly attractive in appearance.

Both Manchu men and women over a period of three hundred years compelled popular recognition of their supremacy. They forced society to support them. Every Chinese had to pay tribute to them in form of rice and tea and other valuables. The Manchus had a supreme contempt for those who supported them. Thèy would not mingle with their subjects. They lived in separate cities or inside separate walls within a Chinese city. They achieved the last word in caste.

King Chow was a typical Manchu city. When the Manchus came first to King Chow they were a strong, virile race of men and women. They had the brain and the brawn to prove their right to dominate. They built their palaces and their walls and ruled the country round about with all the vigor and capacity of feudal lords.

Now there is no more interesting or profitable spectacle on earth than the dissipation of power through maintenance of caste. An aristocrat to establish power must have not only the presumption of superiority, but also the ability to prove it. But it is one of the curiosities of government than in the course of time the mere presumption of superiority is sufficient to keep an aristocracy going long after its ability to

prove its power has passed away. Indeed, at last, caste the world over is a presumption.

Thus as generation after generation of Manchus at King-Chow came and went the Manchus held themselves to be superior and the Chinese so regarded them. For humanity has strange measures of superiority. For one thing, the Manchus lived in great luxury. They did not have to work; in fact, they regarded labor as dishonorable. It was notable with them, as it is with all aristocracies, that when ability to maintain power passed, then sense of superiority grew. All Manchu boys and girls were born with the belief that they were superior. Every young Manchu knew that he was not of common clay. If he ever had the energy to question it, to put it squarely up to himself, whether physically or mentally he could dominate the Chinese in a test as his ancestors had done, he would have put aside the question as useless. For the fact was his caste did the business—it did not have to meet the test because it was never challenged.

In the course of two hundred years the Manchus of King Chow became a community of rarified humans. They were exclusive, proud and many of them rich. Their manners were those of the extremely elegant, their lives rounds of

unruffled ease. They feared no one. Indeed, fear ceased to be an emotion in their lives. No one would attack them. No one would dare. This was the measure of their preparedness—the calm, certain assumption that thinking you will not be attacked is dead sure assurance that you will not be. This self-sufficiency of the Manchus at King Chow was not a hundred years old; it was three hundred years old; not the habit of five generations, but of fifteen.

Then the revolution struck. In the winter of 1911-12 the Chinese empire became a republic. The tribute rice, the tribute tea—the support of the public ceased in a day. The French aristocracy went out in an earthquake. The aristocracy of King Chow was to die by inches, as fire eats its way through punk. The Manchus at the end of a week had nothing to eat. In the midst of ancient silk and costly furs and priceless porcelain of antique make, here was gaunt-eyed Starvation stalking like a ghost. So the Manchus, through their servants, began to sell their treasures. The Japanese came and picked up the finest of the mandarin robes and the best of the sables, and picked them up for next to nothing. One by one the rare old porcelain pieces which had come down in these families for centuries were taken out of the homes

and disposed of to fill the larders. Each week saw the rooms a little more bare, a little more forbidding. There was talk of the Republic having made provision for the Manchus. No such help ever reached King Chow. As the months lengthened into years even the tables passed out of the houses and finally the very beds. Then the day came when there was nothing more to sell. One after another the palaces had emptied themselves of their ornaments, furniture, everything. The Manchus stood around as people in a dream. They were dazed—simply dazed without the power of thought. One thing —they did not go to work. Their kind had not worked for centuries. Work was the primal sin and the ultimate degradation. They would not work, and they did not. So finally they began to sell their palaces brick by brick. It is a fine brick, two hundred years old and more, and it sold readily. Brick by brick the big houses have come down and the brick has been carted off until now King Chow is a pile of whitish rubbish, a skeleton behind its high, strong walls. Nearby Shasi grows apace. And in the midst of these dust heaps at King Chow are little wind shaken mat huts. In the dirt and powdered mortar live the Manchus. Around about them are the ruins of King Chow and in their hearts

only dumb despair and mocking memories.

So passes King Chow, the Manchu city. I saw its men, big, strapping fellows still, with great dignity in their sad, sunken eyes. I saw its women, tall, stately women, still with their elaborate coiffures, their normal feet, their long skirts, sadder, all of them, in their bearing than the men. The bricks of their homes are about all gone. And after they are gone—what? As I watched their tragic figures in the midst of this desolation, destruction and decay, I asked myself the question again and again. After the last brick—what? Work? Never. For it is something to be said of any real aristocracy—it will die with the courage of its caste convictions rather than violate them.

XXXV

A CHINESE GENERAL'S JOB

THE poorest job on earth is that of a Chinese general. The chief reason for this is that if you are a Chinese general you must also be a politician. Nearly all the main office holders in China are generals. This is, in part, the result of the revolution. It naturally followed, as it did with us after the establishment of the United States. There are still people down in Virginia who do not call him George Washington, but General Washington. In fact, after the war with Great Britain the military men had the United States pretty well under their thumbs politically. Indeed, the officers of the Revolution in America formed the Order of Cincinnati, and one of its schemes was to take over the offices. A lot of people scented in it a plan to set up a blood aristocracy, and Washington himself had to put his foot down on it before the order was made to take its proper place as a mere fraternal organization. Then,

most of us can remember that for thirty years after the Civil war in the North most of the men who held office had been military—Grant, Garfield, Harrison and others. And even later than that—there was Roosevelt, who jumped off San Juan Hill into the White House. So it is a perfectly normal evolution for the Chinese general to become a president or a governor.

But there is a difference in China. In the United States the general who became a governor grew so busy with politics that he forgot his military side. He sat up so often at night worrying over who should be coal oil inspector that he forgot he was in command of the state militia. Now in China a governor cannot forget his military side. In the first place, his troops are always about him and they have to be paid, and, as revenues are decidedly slack most of the time, he is kept busy keeping his own army in humor. In the second place, a rival politician may have an army of his own, and so needs watching. And, in the third place, there may be a turnover in Peking which will necessitate the general making up his mind whether he is loyal or recalcitrant, and making it up in a second.

I am going to give two instances to illustrate just how rocky the road is for generals in China.

The first is the story of General Twang Fang. Fang was beloved by the missionaries in all the Yangtse valley. When the dowager empress made up her mind to wipe the foreigners out of China she sent a telegram to every governor along the Yangtse which read: "Exterminate the foreigners." For "exterminate" Fang read "protect" and the missionaries were saved. Fang was governor at Nanking at the time. When the revolution broke out, in 1911, it started in Szechuan, and the Peking government sent Fang with his 2,500 soldiers up to Cheng-tu to stop it. He never got to Cheng-tu, for when he reached Chung-King he heard that the revolutionists had captured Hankow, down the river. So he was cut off. He couldn't go forward and he couldn't go back. He made up his mind to cut loose from his troops, who were disaffected, and escape to Peking in disguise. Then he reconsidered and decided to offer his troops $25,000 to help him make his way out of the country. They demanded to see the actual money. Of course, he didn't have it, and they refused. He went back to the idea of disguise. As he was slipping out the gate of the city of Tzu Chow he was recognized by his soldiers. They dragged him into a temple and commanded him to kneel. Fang was a Manchu and proudly

refused to kneel. They slashed his head off as he stood.

This is the second instance. When Yuan Shih Kai concluded that he was cut out for a king he stationed his own friends around through the provinces in charge of the troops and in the governors' palaces. Then the revolution broke out again, and although Yuan Shih Kai saved his neck by dying with an opportuneness that suggested suicide, but wasn't, the revolutionists in different provinces went after Yuan's friends with a vengeance. One of his friends was General Kiang Pei Kun, in charge of the troops in Chang-Sha. The soldiers of Hunan dashed into Chang-Sha and cleaned out the other side. They killed, burned and looted. All authority went to smash and people with means either fled with their wealth or concealed it. General Kiang Pei Kun took to a small boat, and in the disguise of a labourer of the lowest caste made down the river. I am going to let Captain Reid of the Tung-Wo, one of the best-known captains of the Yangtse and one of the best fellows in the world tell the rest.

"You see," said Captain Reid to me, "the lid had slipped off hell and the pot tipped over in Chang-Sha. They were murdering 'em like sticking pigs in autumn. And frying their liv-

ers—d'ye see? Frying 'em like beef steak and eating of 'em. I was alongside the hulk—the wharf, d'ye see? I was there for the company—for passengers. Ye see that. And we were getting passengers—swarms of 'em, like ants on their busy day. They came bundlin' over the sides with their money in boxes, baskets, satchels—everything—until we were stocked up like a blooming money vault in a Shanghai bank. And what do you think? The commissioner of the port sent me word that I better pull off from alongside the hulk—that he couldn't be responsible. The rioting soldiers wanted my passengers. He sent me that word, d'ye see? Me pull out? Well, I put on my pistols—not where you could see 'em, but I put 'em on—kind of under my coat-tails like—d'ye see, and I ran up the union jack. And I stayed there all night—with the shooting and burning and frying of livers raging all around and passengers with money bags tumbling onto the ship all the time. I was there for passengers, d'ye see? I got out at five the next morning, and forty-five miles up the river we took on another refugee with a bag of gold. And the coolie on the sampan, he sort of whispered to the comprador and the comprador come to me and say that the general is up the river, all in. So I haul about, and about

two miles up the river we come alongside the general in a sampan—all in—as dirty as a beggar and trembling all over like a cat in a cold kitchen. And we hauled him aboard, the poor starving wretch, and he flipped and flapped and fell over on the deck. And the Chinese took him down and doused him into the bathtub, and he came to, dazed sort of like, and guessed he was saved. He had wandered about four days without food. We take the lot to Hankow. And I think no more about the whole blooming business, not me, until one day a Chinaman came bowing and bobbing alongside and gave me this watch and this chain—it's Chinese gold—ye can see for yourself—and the two English sovereigns a-dangling to it—not bad—don't you think so?—and this letter. Will you read that now? Take the spelling and all—it's better that way:

" 'Hankow, August 12, 1916.

" 'Dear Sir—In presenting you these few lines, I express my hearty thanks for your kindness in saving my life when I was under the chase of the Hunan soldiers in Hunan. It is undoubt that my life would lose if you didn't turn your kind hand and stop the boat. I suppose you know that I am rather a man of poverty, so it is hard for me to express my thanks substan-

tically, but I should remember your kind act in heart and try to repay my thanks in time when I can afford to do.

" 'I am faithfully yours,

" 'KIANG PEI KUN.' "

It isn't much of a note from a literary viewpoint. But it is a fine picture of genuine gratitude. And, moreover, it is a bit of a document in the history of troublous times in a young republic.

XXXVI

THE FICTION OF ROYAL BLOOD

STANDING in the midst of the splendors of the Forbidden City, Peking, I had some thoughts on history's most colossal con-game—royal blood. But before I get to that I want to take up the Forbidden City itself. Just now I used the word "splendors" with care. For the most part buildings in China are shabby and dilapidated. The used-up, pealed-off appearance of the country persists up to the very walls of the Forbidden City. But it ceases there. The sacred city itself comes very near being a real sure-enough dream—like you used to fancy heaven was like when you accepted the pearly gates as an architectural fact.

Now this may be due to the manner in which you approach it. You first strike the Chinese City, with its dull fifty-foot wall. The Chinese City is big and uninteresting compared to the interior Chinese towns, like Chung-King. Then you get into the Tartar City, which is scattered.

That is, it is full of big empty spaces, used for nothing in particular. It would be no sight at all if its streets did not show multitudes of camels, donkeys, two-wheeled prairie schooners, wheelbarrows and queer people, with everybody muffled up to their eyes in furs and rags—for it is winter. And yet you object to the Chinese spread out so. They look better huddled—like rabbits. Indeed, you find it easy to put Peking down as a glaring over-advertised fake before you get to the Imperial City, which is inside the Tartar City and not much better than the Chinese city. And when you reach the forbidden city and pay your thirty cents to get in —for it is still forbidden—you are discounting every tale you ever heard about it to beat the band. This impression is helped out some by the fact that people are skating on the big moat which surrounds the sacred enclosure. But once inside you change your mind. You find yourself in a big enclosure, crowded with color. The roofs are a glistening yellow, the walls blue, green and circus-wagon red, and in front of most of the palaces are meshes of white marble balustrades. I say meshes because they are just tangles of carved white marble, serving no purpose whatsoever except for ornamentation. But they do that. The eye is lost in following their

curves and a fairy-like effect is achieved.

I paid one dollar to go into one of the palaces and look over the things which were saved out of the royal palaces when the dynasty collapsed. The whole array of jeweled boxes, jade and porcelain and bronze ornaments and robes mounting into the thousands are gorgeous beyond compare. The crown jewels, for instance, in the Tower of London look tawdry compared to them. There is no such beautiful handicraft anywhere else on earth. The looters in 1900 did not get a fraction of it. Now you see no hint of all this fascinating art anywhere else in China. The beautiful things in rich men's houses are poor at best. They are truly regal here. And the palaces, all furbished up as part of Yuan Shih Kai's design to be king, are a fitting jewel box.

I now come to the royal blood thought. This Forbidden City with its beautiful contents was the habitation of a royal family. It had become so exclusive that it shut itself absolutely in and the world absolutely out. When the emperor sallied forth the population outside poked its nose in the dirt and dared not look upon him. Through the influence of the times this dynasty all but petered out. The breath of revolt swept it away as a cobweb is brushed aside with a

a careless or casual movement of the hand.

How did it ever maintain itself so long? By the world's weak subscription to the aforesaid greatest con-game in history—royal blood. The subscription is as old as the world itself, and no race is free from it. Most of the world has been time out of mind monarchical. But there was really less use for a monarchy here in China than aywhere else in the world. For while the Chinese are homogeneous, their eighteen provinces are virtually autonomous. The general run of Chinese knew personally no government except the local authorities. That government did not give security to life and property. It existed for the very fundamental purpose of taxation, to give someone the job of collecting a tax and paying him for doing it, which is a very complete definition of the ordinary application of the doctrine of state's rights. Presumably the autonomous provinces of China banded together under a central government at Peking and under a monarchy with the idea of national strength through union. But the central government at Peking, within the memory of man, protected nothing. It has been successively slapped, insulted and preyed upon from the outside for the last hundred years. It is the veriest fiction that the central government

in China was necessary to speak with authority for all the constituent states. So far as the outside world was concerned, Peking had no authority worthy the name. Witness the British, French, Japanese, Russian and German occupations of Chinese territory, a thing no responsible government could tolerate and live.

No, the truth is that monarchy existed in China, not from the necessities of centralized government, but because of humanity's weakness for kings—the belief that a quart or two of exclusive red fluid in the veins of a certain family endows its members with privileges beyond those given ordinary clay. It is a great fraud, this historical fake, when you come to think of it. For centuries the Chinese people have been industrious, temperate, frugal and dirt poor. They have dragged from their fertile soil mountains of wealth, but they have neither retained it nor enjoyed it. A wise, strong central government would have enforced scientific increases in the production of that wealth and a just distribution of it, and exercised for all the people a protection of their national accumulations against the invaders of the outside world. A dynasty, exercising such beneficent rule could justly call for loyalty. But the people of China remained loyal to the dynasty

without any of these benefits. They starved and struggled along in their dirty hovels, shivering in their rags in winter and blistering half clad in summer, beasts of burden most of them, weary and heavy-laden through the whole of their allotted span. The one bright, shining spot in their vast empire was the Forbidden City. Here the great palaces shouldered their generous roofs into the sky. Here were shimmering lakes and spreading trees; here art and ease, beauty and luxury, jeweled case and lacquered chest, silk so sheer it would tear at the touch, embroideries heavy in richness as lead is in weight—here was royalty.

There has not been a Chinese emperor in the last two hundred years who stripped to the skin was not as any other Oriental of his breed. In muscular tissue the average emperor could not compare with the average coolie perhaps, or in heart action, and in brain capacity there were tens of thousands in his empire who could surpass him. But he had one thing they did not have; the working plans of the greatest con-game in history—the claim to royal blood. His father was a king before him—a natural fact of infinitesimal account, but a psychological assertion of world-wide and age-old potency. He was of royal blood: therefore the world of men who

toil and moil were to surrender all reason and self-interest that they might the better exalt him.

A set of democratic dreamers pricked the bubble in China. A touch—and the revolution of Dr. Sun and his crowd was just that—and the fake exploded.

So the Forbidden City, as I wandered through its solitudes, seemed a magnificent monument to a dream of power to which four hundred million drudging men and women subscribed as something real, when in truth it was a phantom.

XXXVII

A CHINESE PRESIDENT

IT was Carey, the young American railroad-builder in China, who arranged my call on the president of China. I went over to Carey's home, and President Li Yuan Hung sent his chief secretary, Mr. Kuo Tai-chi, for us. Kuo was educated in America and shows it.

At the palace gate, plump! dropped the guns of the soldiers. But Kuo waved them aside. The soldiers brought their heels together with a click and stood at rigid attention.

"See that gate?" said Kuo. "It's got a story. Everything around here has a story. Every foot of this ground simply bubbles up history. Emperor Chen once captured a Mohammedan princess and brought her here as a wife. She wept and wept for her native land—all that sort of thing, you know. Now, right outside here was a big Mohammedan camp, and the emperor built this gate so the princess could sit in the upper story and be relieved of her homesickness

by looking at her countrymen in the camp."

We wandered on through a maze of buildings ablaze with imperial yellow. There was one exception, a solid white structure, built square and looking like a family vault. This was part of Yuan Shih Kai's imperial dream. He had it built and placed within it a gold box containing three names from which were to be selected his successor—easy kind of election for a young republic. Only two men know who were so preferred, and they won't tell. The three were probably Yuan's sons.

Once we stopped and went into the ancient throne room. It was heaped with old furniture and beautiful screens. Some of the furniture was broken and the whole attic-like look of the place spelled ruin.

President Li proved to be a very heavy man with a large square head, covered with short wiry hair which comes well down in front and close up to big, rather flat ears. His jaw was big, his cheeks heavy, but firm. He has a military moustache, rather scant, as you often see in Chinese, not thick as you would find it in a westerner. He has a firm mouth and a good nose. His predominating features were his eyes. They were the lustrous, gentle, kind which are capable of showing great sorrow or

great anger, but which normally carry kindliness. He was clad in a buff uniform with red facings. The epaulets were of red and carried three stars. He appeared as a soldier pure and simple, and looked a man ready to take to the field without having to pick up anything but his sword. His office was furnished with a big desk and a lot of red morocco chairs and a big sofa, also in red morocco. The carpet was a plain Chinese rug. The hangings were a blue brocade and rather subdued in effect. Two boys in blue uniforms, after the fashion of bell-boy uniforms in American hotels, served tea, which no one drank, the president, in his interest in the conversation, evidently forgetting it.

President Li speaks some English. However, we did our talking through Mr. Kuo. I would make a statement and then Kuo would come back with the president's answer, as "His excellency says that in what you say of China you have hit the nail on the head."

We talked a little of everything—about the needs of a stable currency, the advantage of a uniform educational system and above all the great benefits which follow railroad construction.

President Li said that China's need was ready money and the consequent necessity of convey-

ing to foreign financiers that China was a splendid security. "We have the smallest national debt of all the larger nations—only $200,000,000. Our people are universally industrious and temperate. As you have seen for yourself in your journeys over China, the potential possibilities of China in agriculture, in minerals and in manufacturing power are unlimited. But to develop these resources, modern appliances must be requisitioned, and it takes money to initiate these appliances. China will pay for the money she obtains. She has always paid. She has never repudiated."

I told him that so far as the United States was concerned, if money was forthcoming to China in the shape of loans, public sentiment would have a lot to do with it. For while the bankers made the loans, the people themselves, by investing, sustained the bankers in their loans and that a favorable public sentiment made, therefore, for easier transactions. I contended that basically the regard for China by America now rested upon a sentimental hope of the permanency of the republican government in China. I told him we did not want any part of their land, but we did want a chance to trade with China in a fair field and no favor.

This brought from the president a warm ex-

pression of the feeling of friendship in China for America. It was genuine and not perfunctory in the least.

We went on discussing the relations of the two countries in this way for a long time. As the president talked he kept fingering the tablecloth in front of him, turning it over and over in his big rufous hands with just that show of the embarrassment you would expect in a soldier.

When he had concluded the president arose and went over to his desk and pulled out two photographs of himself—one showed him in evening clothes, the other in the full regalia of a general. He carefully wrote his name in English across the one I said I wanted—the one in military attire—and armed with it I shook hands with the president of the Oriental Republic and departed. Night had come down in the palace and the soldiers stepped closer as we passed and studied us and then stood at salute. It was very, very quiet except for the rustle of birds over-head. I had but one thought as I wormed my way back to the gate of the Mohammedan princess—a hope that the Republic of China would last, and that the blessings and benefactions of democracy would turn to gold the industry, the temperance, the infinite good

nature of this ancient and historic people.

But for the moment the hope remained only a hope and fell far short of a conviction. For the way of liberty in these oriental windings is certain to be difficult. And the palaces in the night about me exhaled uncertainty. For in this spot the oriental romantic thing had happened yesterday; it could happen tomorrow. The whole atmosphere vibrated with what had been, what was now afoot, and what was coming, not in the order of designing men, but according to the Arabian Night fancies of a strange civilization.

XXXVIII

THE DEAD DYNASTY

I WISH to transfer to you, for a few minutes, the atmosphere of China. A friend took me to the summer palace, which is about ten miles out of Peking. It is a park about three miles square. It is literally smothered in buildings of palatial proportions, a riot of colored porcelain highly glazed, the buildings set around a huge artificial lake dotted with decorative islands with a background of decorative mountains. The walks are covered with decorative arbors. In the lake rests a marble barge. That is one picture to keep in mind.

Here is another. About a mile away is another huge enclosure which is full of heaps of ugly stone and broken brick, hummocks of mortar, clusters of drunken pillars, leaning every which way, fragments of broken marble stairways that start out of rubbish and end in rubbish. This is the old summer palace.

This old summer palace was a marvel. Many

years ago, the French nation sent a troop of soldiers to Peking to proffer France's friendship to China. The Chinese seized the soldiers, stripped them and then sliced them with sharp knives all over. Having done this, they tied the mutilated men out in the sun and let the flies eat at the wounds until the men died. France sent another expedition and among other things destroyed this summer palace with a savage vengeance that scarcely left one stone upon another, a vengeance so complete that when the late Dowager Empress decided to take the money which China had set aside to build a navy and build a new summer palace she had to select a new site.

The new summer palace eventually cost the Empress Dowager and her dynasty the crown, and established the Republic. For when Japan pounced upon China in 1894, the Chinese navy crumpled up like tissue paper, and the prestige of China, and of the Dowager, went glimmering and the Republic followed.

Here, then, is a palace which played a major part in the history of the Orient. The only intimation of the personality which was responsible for it is found in one of the yellow palaces. My friend led me through a network of covered walks, in and out of a wilderness of yellow

houses to a big glass door, and, parting a pair of curtains, showed me a big oil painting of the empress. This image reigns in this deserted fairyland, as silent and as inscrutable as a sleeping princess.

I had seen most of the sights of the Chinese capital. I had been to the Bell Tower and to the Drum Tower, where they tap curfew at nine o'clock on a monster bass drum. I had visited the sleeping Buddha in the Lama temple, a figure 70 feet high, carved out of a single tree trunk; also the Temple of Confucius, where the sayings of that sage are preserved in carvings on stone tablets, and the Hall of Classics, where the emperor used to bestow diplomas on the prize-winners in the national examinations. I had gone to the Temple of Heaven and stood in the Center of the Universe, where the Emperors all stood at the beginning of the year and received their order from celestial guides, but no sight in Peking had impressed me so much as this silent simulacrum of the first woman of the East, sitting in the midst of this deserted grandeur.

The Empress was a concubine. But there is no sensuality in her straight thin lips, her thin, long face, her calm eyes or her high, well-shaped brow. There is no line there which spells any-

thing but possession of unchallenged sovereignty—and craft, not for defense, but for attack. First and last she came into contact with a great many people. She could be bamboozled, but it took an artist to do it. When the Boxers prepared to wipe out all the foreigners in Peking they had to have her consent. To get it they contended to her that by taking a certain oath the Boxers were immune to gunfire. Bullets would not pierce them. The old Empress said if this were true, she was for the proposition. She ordered a trial in her preserves. A row of Boxers were brought before her. The soldiers fired. The Boxers were uninjured. The Dowager was ostensibly convinced. But she called in an American who was counsel to her, a man still living in Peking, and told him her experience. "Let me do the shooting," said the American. The Empress ordered the Boxers back for a second trial. But they fled.

However, she could be worked. There was a rich Chinese statesman named Hsu Chang, a good deal of a tightwad. He was an enemy of Yuan Shih Kai, who schemed Hsu out of the favor of the Empress. Hsu tried to see the Empress, but could not. He bribed the doorkeeper of the palace and the eunuchs, but he could not reach the Dowager. She needed the

man's friendship and influence, and would have been glad to have attached him to her. But Yuan, the Empress' advisor, planned to keep him out of favor. Finally Hsu got word to the Empress that he wanted to present her a sum of money in person. It was a master-stroke, for the old woman was mercenary. Yuan could not escape the duty of presenting the proposition. But he bethought him of a trick, a low-down, political trick. He knew Hsu was a tightwad. So he went to the Dowager and said: "Hsu, the rich man, desires to present $200,000 to your majesty. Shall I admit him?" The Dowager ordered him admitted at once. Hsu came in, all smiles, cocky and triumphant, and presented her with $20,000. And when she found it was $20,000 instead of $200,000, her wrath was indescribable, and Hsu found himself still further in disgrace.

People in China generally regard the Empress as the most able of recent personages in Oriental history. But with all her ability she remained Chinese. She sacrificed the armament needs of her country to satisfy a fancy. With all the world snarling a menace around her, the Empress dreamed of marble stairways, and lacquered lattices and vistas vanishing in sheer loveliness. A rattling good navy would have

put China and herself at the forefront in 1894, and changed the history of the world. A summer palace merely fed the idle fancy of an old woman. But she decided on the summer palace, not because she was a woman, but because she was Chinese.

That brings me to the Chinese atmosphere, or rather a close view of the summer palace, which my friend and I made, brought me to the Chinese atmosphere. The stonework and porcelain portions of the palace are as stable and beautiful in their suggestion of permanence as anything could be. The carpenter work is about the rottenest I ever saw. The woodwork is everywhere falling apart. It was a botched job in the beginning covered up with much bright paint. A few years comparatively have revealed its frauds, and a few years more will effect its ruin. If one can understand the meaning of a majestic porcelain tower built to stand forever, and at its side a veranda with gaping joints and sagging rafters, then one can get the Chinese atmosphere.

Because the Chinese atmosphere is made up of just these contrasts—magnificent conceptions, partly carried out, partly contradicted—a mixture of dream and nightmare—a medley of beautiful harmonies and a busy afternoon in a

boiler factory—a touch of the essence of attar of roses and the backyard of a glue factory on a warm day.

I stood in the sunlight with my friend and took consideration of my surroundings. Far off I could hear the hoarse honk of a Ford, and also the long, clear, sweet note of the bronze trumpet blown by a ragged tinker. In the distance I saw a cavalcade of camels, on their way to Mongolia, just as you see them in Biblical pictures, and beyond them a group of American locomotives smoking up a roundhouse. Before me was the portrait of a shrewd, beautiful, capable woman, stronger than Esther, or Zenobia, or Cleopatra, in robes of incomparable fineness; beyond me a road carrying traffic that might have passed through the gates of Jerusalem in the day of Jesus Christ and not have attracted notice. I took out my kodak and snapped my friend. And it seemed to me that I was standing on the sheer edge of the world and watching the waters of the West meet the waters of the East—the breath of antiquity fanning the cheeks of the present—the image of Oriental aristocracy and the image of Occidental democracy blending into an indescribable something which was at once new and old, strange and familiar.

The waters of the West which washed upon

this alien shore the Ford and the American locomotive and my kodak had also left lying here, among these fairy palaces, the tiny plant—liberty—feeble enough as yet, but winding its tender, tenacious tendrils around the decaying skeleton of a dead dynasty and over the proud face of the silent queen.

Occasionally a man thinks that sort of thing, and once in a while is daring enough to write it.

But my friend broke the spell. He was pointing to a stone chalice.

"This was the vase," he said, "where every night they caught the dew to wash the Empress' face."

XXXIX

A CHINESE CONGRESS

LIKE all legislative bodies, the Chinese congress is a general target for popular criticism. People pounce upon their lawmakers. I am not going into the reasons for this. I simply state that it is so.

It is true in China. The young men who have set up the Chinese Republic have the idea that a democracy is conserved by its law-making branch. A republic is a government by law; therefore the legislative arm is most important. Every legislator appreciates this fact. But as a rule it doesn't appeal to the people. Legislatures and congresses have such a sloppy way of doing things that people love to sit around and condemn them.

The first congress China had, Yuan Shih Kai, who wanted to change from president to emperor, dismissed. When the revolutionists got their republic set up a second time the congress resumed. There are two houses. The big house

has about six hundred members, the small one about two hundred. I visited both.

I was very much impressed with both houses. The small one is as quiet as our United States Senate, and the big one is a lot more orderly than our House of Representatives.

The two houses occupy buildings which were built for schools, and are tucked away off in one corner of Peking, away from the palatial beauties of the presidential residence. Down in Washington anyone may visit Congress. It is not easy to do this in Peking. First, permission must be obtained. Armed with a permit, I set off for the House of Representatives.

About three hundred feet away from the entrance a couple of soldiers dropped their guns across the path, and it was necessary to produce the permit. But this was not sufficient. They wanted our names. So we passed in our cards and walked along through files of soldiers. Once inside the building, a soldier took my cane away and directed me up a small stairway which led into a very narrow gallery, along which at intervals of about ten feet soldiers were stationed. The legislators were seated as they are in our Congress—in a semi-circle of small desks. They have a calendar which they mimeograph, and a calendar was on each desk. The speaker sits on

a raised dais, with the clerks and reporters in front of him. At his side are chairs for members of the cabinet, who attend the session, and, unlike our cabinet members, can be questioned. The chairman doesn't use a gavel, but a small hand bell.

The members were mostly young. Nearly all of them were in Chinese dress and kept on their skull caps. Those dressed in European attire removed their hats. Most of these young men were from the "gentry," the professional land-holding classes, not merchants. Nearly all of them have been educated abroad—the majority of them in Japan. They use in speaking a common dialect, but if a speaker should lapse into his native provincial tongue, as they do occasionally, few present could understand him. This necessity of selected language must have a lot to do with shortening speeches, for none of the addresses I heard had the appearance of the long, dreary harangues which make our Congress so dreadfully wearing on a spectator.

In the house the question up was one over the representation to be allowed the province of Mongolia. It was a minor question, and it was handled very much as our Congress would handle a similar proposition. There is a difference in putting votes, however, which interested

me. The speaker puts only the affirmative side: "Those in favor of the question will rise to their feet." If apparently a majority rise, the negative is not put. In our Congress the speaker says: "Those in favor say aye"; then, "Those opposed say no." If it is close, someone calls for a division. Then the speaker says: "Those in favor rise"; then, "Those opposed rise," the speaker counting each side. If someone doubts his count, he can demand tellers, and the members are passed in a file between two members, who count them. The Chinese method is the better method, in my opinion. It expedites business. It has one danger: It lodges rather arbitrary power in the speaker, who might fudge. I said as much to Mr. C. T. Wang, president of the Chinese Senate, but he said they had taken care of that by providing for a direct challenge of the vote if someone doubted it. The Chinese were anxious to put in an automatic electrical voting device, but the manufacturer would not guarantee it. But the device is perfectly practical, and it ought to be adopted both by China and the United States. The amount of time consumed by roll calls down in Washington is absurd, and if the people knew the facts there would be a national scandal. For the consumption of time is one of the most

dangerous propositions in American politics. Congress fools along until a lot of very important appropriation bills jam up the close of a session, and then the measures are rammed through so that no one knows what is happening. Ninety-nine per cent. of all the foolish work that ever happened in Congress at Washington has taken place at the end of sessions. The fool practice has cost American taxpayers millions.

I asked President Wang what the Chinese were going to do about the calendar at the end of a session. He said they had never had an end of a session and he didn't know. In state legislatures in America we select a paring committee which puts a few bills at the head of the the calendar and lets the other bills die. In congress certain bills, such as appropriation bills, are called privileged and have the preference by right. But, so far as actual consideration is concerned, this privilege in the case of a bill jam at the close of congress is a farce. It is made so by the way congress consumes time needlessly during the session. Quick roll calls would help in the situation. But you will never find a stand-pat leader in favor of automatic voting devices.

The Chinese have another scheme which is

quite revolutionary. It is the hardest thing on earth to get men to attend committee meetings. You can hustle them out to a vote in congress, but it is pulling tacks to get them into the committee rooms. The Chinese congress has sought to overcome this by fining a member ten dollars for every absence, and after the third offense he is put out of congress.

The speaker does not use his bell often. In our legislative bodies the chairman has to whack with his gavel a good deal to keep order. So far this is not necessary in the Chinese congress, and there is no limitation on the length of speeches, the filibuster being as yet unknown. But that will come in time. Since the beginning of congress there has been but one serious fracas—it was over the question of state's rights —and a lot of ink wells were thrown.

This fracas has cost a lot of legislative prestige in China. People say, "Those fool legislators," and all that. But before I join in that chorus I will have to do a little more thinking about the assault on Charles Sumner, as well as about several lively scratching bouts I have seen in congress myself.

The things I saw in the Chinese congress were almost exact duplications of scenes in our own congress. A young man arose to speak.

It was evidently his maiden effort. He was greeted with a round of applause from his admirers—the half-humourous, mock-enthusiastic applause which I have heard hundreds of times at home. The member blushed furiously and made his way to the tribune, the raised place from which an orator speaks here. He cleared his throat and dragged out from among his clothes a manuscript and started in on the speech of his life. And then, as the applause didn't come, his voice grew weaker, and when he finished the meager hand-clapping which followed was like a verdict of guilty. A square-headed Chinese down in front arose to reply. He was a leader. You could tell it without looking. His words came snappy and sharp. His sentences followed quick and decisively. He got the applause going and he got under it and pushed it along in the good old style of a practiced orator. And he carried his point.

The life of a republic is in its legislation. The fountain of that vitality is in the popular assembly. The young Republicans of China have that idea, and they are trying to carry it out. They may not do it. The legislature is not popular either with the people or with the officials. Both say: "Congress has been in session for months, and what has it done? Nothing." It

sounds serious. And in a new republic it is. But I have heard that a good many times in the United States and nothing ever came of it. And nothing may come of it in China.

Indeed, in the matter of legislative assemblies, we are still in our democratic babyhood. We are all developing our popular government lungs and it isn't fatal, if we do occasionally get on people's nerves.

XL

THE HABIT OF BREAKING LOOSE

THERE is one aspect of China over which I am in difficulty. I want to tell you about it and I fear I cannot. But I am going to try. It has to do with the occasional inexplicable attitude of the Chinese mind.

In Peking I dined with several leading Chinese —leaders in the new Republic. Intellectually they were the equals of the big men I met during the war in London and Paris, and the evening was virtually the same as you would pass at dinner in the White House at Washington. We talked politics, war, literature, and eventually we got into the subject of antiques. One member of the party, an American guest, roared because a Chinese general in charge of the antiquities in the Forbidden City had his soldiers wash the green fuzz off the bronzes—fuzz that it had taken centuries of care to acquire He was so severe in his criticism that I finally said:

"Oh, well, fighting men are fighting men.

You can't expect a general to be an antiquarian."

"No," said Admiral Tsai, who had hitherto taken no part in the conversation. "That general was probably too antiquated to be an antiquarian."

Now, there is no race on earth that has a finer appreciation of the old and artistic than the Chinese, but here was one general who didn't, and he broke loose.

I had lunch with President Tsur of Tsing Hua College and Mr. and Mrs. Chiao. I never had more delightful converse. Mr. Tsur is a scholar full of the most interesting and practical views of education. Mr. Chiao is as companionable a man as you could meet anywhere. His wife, Mrs. Chiao, a beautiful Chinese woman, was as charming and intellectually as interesting a hostess as I have ever met. After lunch I addressed the students in the college on the benefits of patriotism to the present Chinese Republic.

Now, my speech was the usual Fourth of July effort. But the lecturer who preceded me on that same platform was a Chinese who had broken loose. This was Mr. Su Chung-Hsuan. He was sent by the Confucian association, and for two hours and a half he talked on the theory that the earth is absolutely flat. His idea is

that the earth is a circular plane. In the center of this plane is the North Pole surrounded by an icy sea. Peary and Amundsen simply went to the same place and deceived themselves into thinking one was the North Pole and the other the South Pole. He contended that the world did not revolve, for if it did the idea of "above" and "below" would be ridiculous. For instance, I am in China and you are in America. Are you "above" or "below" me? Chung-Hsuan's proposition was that the earth moves slightly up and down. The sun travels above or below the rim of the earth, causing the seasons. That is, the sun does move. But what about day and night? Chung-Hsuan had an answer for that, all right. He says that the sun at noon begins to draw away from the earth and at night has got so far away you simply cannot see it, and that it comes into view again by approaching the earth the next morning. He denied the existence of gravitation flatly. Chung-Hsuan had simply broken loose.

China owes as much to Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen as she does to anybody on earth. Sun is a glorious dreamer. Years ago he conceived the idea of a Chinese Republic. No more daring idea ever fomented in the mind of man. Here were four hundred million age-old serfs, most of them inar-

ticulate, and here was a government so conservative that it scarcely recognized the existence of the rest of the world, which it dismissed as negligible and barbarian. Armed with nothing but a dream of democracy, Sun went up and down the world telling men of his dream and exhorting them to see the vision. He finally became prominent enough to challenge the attention of his government. He was hunted and hounded from country to country. He hid among the rocks of the desert and in the hovels of the poor. He lived on the locusts and wild honey. But never for one moment did he surrender one jot or tittle of his dream of self-governed China. His dream grew, but it remained a dream, and gossamery and diaphanous a dream as it was, when it collided with the Manchu autocracy, the autocracy was so frail that it burst like a bubble, and Sun's dream suddenly came true.

Sun, as was fitting, was the first president of China. The first thing he did was to break loose. The Republic was proclaimed at Nanking. Dominating this city is a hill, the Purple mountain. When the Manchus conquered China, the last of the Mings, a very good man, died, and his spirit, according to legend, could have gone to heaven. But Ming's spirit refused to

do so. It remained right on the tip top of this mountain. Every morning the spirit came down and asked the shepherds, "Have the Chinese regained control of China?" For three hundred years the peasants had to answer, "Not yet." Well, as soon as Sun became president he lined his army up in two rows leading from Nanking to the foot of the mountain, and then bright and early one morning he announced to the air, "The Chinese have reconquered China." Thereupon Ming's spirit quit the mountain top and went to heaven, satisfied.

Sun didn't remain president long. The exigencies of politics made it necessary to put Yuan Shih Kai in the executive chair. But part of the deal was the appointment of Sun as minister of communications at thirty thousand dollars a year. He had a special car and he rode around over China dreaming dreams about railroad construction. In his car he had a big glass map of China, a pot of black paint and a sponge. He would sit in front of this map and study it. Then he would jump to his feet, draw a black line from one town to another, consider it a while and then jump and sponge out the line and draw another somewhere else. He was always drawing imaginary railroad lines and rubbing them out again. He had no money to build rail-

road lines, and a little matter like grades was not in his calculations. He was too busy dreaming to be oppressed by such incidentals. When, in 1913, it was believed that Yuan Shih Kai was getting ready to throw the Republic overboard, Sun and the radicals revolted. They were put down by Yuan. Sun fled to Japan, and from there worked up the revolution which finally, with the aid of Yuan's sudden death, put the Republic on its feet. In doing this Sun spent a million dollars.

Now, this is all likely to give the wrong impression. The Chinese republic is getting along in pretty good shape. Every day the government lasts, those concerned like it better. If it can keep on its feet a few years longer, the whole Chinese people will come into a national consciousness which will insure permanency of a republican form. But, at the same time, the world must expect severe strains on its hopefulness. There was Chang Hsun, for instance. Chang Hsun was the dowager empress' hostler. He helped her escape out of Peking during the Boxer troubles. She made him a general for this. He collected and drilled his own army. And when the revolution came he took his army and retired along a railroad line of which he took possession. He said he was favorable to

the Republic, but no one was so dead sure of that. He still had his army, and he insisted on his soldiers wearing pig-tails, which are prohibited by law, and he supported his force by levying, in a perfectly arbitrary fashion, local taxation. There were members of parliament who talked about impeaching him and all that, but they didn't. Chang Hsun had simply broken loose, and they let it go at that.

XLI

POLITICS AND NANKING

THE first thing you hear about when you reach China are the Mings and the last thing that follows you like an echo when you are leaving China are the Mings. Now, I have investigated the Mings at Nanking.

If you see anything that looks old and curious, the Chinaman who has it to sell tells you it belonged to the Ming dynasty. The other day in a curio shop I inquired about an old dagger which was for sale at an extravagant figure, and the Chinese told me it belonged to the Ming dynasty.

Right back of me was one of the small heating stoves which are common in China. They are only a little larger than a quart bottle, and they usually have cast on their fronts names like "The Pride of the World." I made believe I had lost interest in the dagger, and I fixed a fascinated eye on that stove. "Does that belong to the Ming dynasty?" I asked.

Then the Chinese began to laugh—with his mouth, his chest, his stomach and lastly with his eyes—the last thing a Chinaman laughs with. He knew I was a sucker, but he didn't dream that I could be sucker enough to believe that stove was antique. After a while he quieted down, and then he suddenly broke out again in convulsions. The second time he was laughing at himself for having laughed at me.

But he quit talking Ming dynasty to me. The Mings were the last pure Chinese rulers before the Tartars and Manchus butted into Chinese history. They set up in the king business about seventy-five years before Columbus discovered America. Nanking was their capital. That was why I came to Nanking. I arrived Christmas Day with the mercury around zero—the Chinese call it "five-coat weather," and most of them haven't as many as two.

I don't suppose there is another town like Nanking in the world. After you crawl through the city gate you can't find it. You wander around for miles, watching people working on farms and feeding stock and chopping down trees, but you don't see any town. You will follow a paved street right through a farm and over a great bridge that doesn't cross anything and leads from a cow lot to a barnyard. It

LIMESTONE CLIFFS OF THE BELLOWS GORGE

looks a lot like an American township would if somebody built a thirty-foot wall all around it. But if you keep going as I did in Nanking, you will find the town, eight miles away from the gate you entered, tucked away in one corner like a handful of wheat in a bushel basket.

You begin to realize long before you reach the town that something has happened to Nanking. What has happened to it is politics. It has figured in Chinese politics since 300 B. C. As soon as it was founded rival kings began to fight over it, and every warrior who happened along took a swipe at the place. It is little wonder that there is so little of it left. And the worst of it is that the politicians are still at it. In the old days when the kings of the north wanted a little diversion at the expense of the kings of the south they got up an army and besieged Nanking. Then when the Taiping rebels a half century or so ago concluded to belt the Ching dynasty they took Nanking and destroyed most of it. And when the revolutionists who set up the present government decided to strike they pounced on Nanking. Here the new republic was declared. If the republic capsizes and someone lands on the throne, the first thing he will do, after he gets his crown on straight, will be to come down and shoot up Nanking.

You can't say the people here don't like it. As a matter of fact, being destroyed seems to come perfectly natural to them. Their wall is twenty-two miles long, and it encloses more ruins than any wall, big or little, on this terrestrial ball. You can see ruins in all possible stages. Most of the former town has gone back to farming, but if the farmer undertook to stir up the subsoil a bit he would plow into a temple or a palace of an ancient day, like as not. Every fresh set of fighters joy in adding to the collection of ruins. Six years ago the Manchu City, a separate town within the main walls, was the pride of the place. In the midst of this Manchu City, however, was a ruin—all that was left of the first Ming emperor's palaces. When the recent revolutionists took Nanking they destroyed the Manchu City, but spared the Ming ruins. And the Ming ruins look modern and up-to-date now compared with that Manchu City. Talk about a tornado. No tornado ever threshed a building into brick dust as those Chinese revolutionists pulverized that Manchu City. They literally wiped it out, actually not leaving one stone upon another. I have seen the destruction at the battle front in Europe. I never saw such destruction as I witnessed in Nanking. It is awful. For miles the ground is a dead waste of

broken brick and shattered stone, in the midst of which are the Ming ruins looking, for ruins, quite neat and nifty.

It doesn't seem to affect the citizens at all. As I said, they sort of specialize in ruins. This was the place where they used to have the civil service examinations in China. The examination hall is now a ruin, its 20,000 cells, where they used to keep the students cooped up for a week to prevent them from cribbing, all gaping at the sky. The finest pagoda in China used to be here, built entirely of fine blue porcelain. All that is left of it is the big China button which was once its top-knot.

But the greatest ruin that Nanking can boast is the tomb of the first Ming emperor and his wife, Ma. He had seventy-one other wives, but Ma was the only one he cared to be buried with. There are two authentic portraits of the first Ming extant. He was a queer-looking chap, with the slantingest of slant eyes and a chin that stuck out like a door-knob. I have never seen such a chin, and personally I think the artist was a liar. Ming cleaned out everything in China and set up his empire and then went to work to fix up a private graveyard which would last. He located it up against a mountain with a grand avenue leading up to the main

gate of the grave. Ming originally was a cowboy. He just naturally took to animals, and when he got this grand avenue idea into his head he resolved to establish a permanent menagerie. He had artists carve critters in pairs—camels standing and kneeling, elephants the same, also horses and lions. These he set up along his grand avenue. In front of them he also stuck up some enormous stone men. There they stand to this day. There they will be standing for the next ten thousand years. No revolutionist, though he have revenge and ruin bubbling out of him at every pore, will be able to demolish them. They were put there to stay. And they will. But they are in ruins, just the same. The grand avenue has disappeared. The animals, when I saw them, were standing in the midst of a winter wheat field, the green crop growing right up under their bellies, and I saw a humble husbandman wiping the mud off his hoe on the hind leg of one of the great Ming's pet lions.

In this frail and fragile world it is hard to beat the tooth of Time. She feeds insatiably upon the pride and pomp of the centuries, crushing between her merciless molars the glories of the past. But old Ming certainly gave her something to gnaw that will hold her a while.

XLII

THE LESSON OF THE GREAT WALL

WHAT does the great wall of China look like? I had always wanted to know myself, and I found out. A good many westerners have visited the wall of China, but it is dollars to doughnuts that no white man ever saw it on a colder day than I did. There was no one about, and the only sign of life during my whole visit at Chunglingchiao was a line of bobbing camels as they jingled their way through a great gate on out to Mongolia. No doubt you have forgotten the main facts about the Great Wall as you learned them at school. The wall is fifteen hundred miles long. It was built by the Chinese, starting about 300 B. C., to keep the northern hordes out of the country. It didn't do it.

Now, I have been trying all my life to find out more than this about the Great Wall, and I never could. Nor can I now—history is as silent as a clam about it. Indeed, there are only two facts

in connection with it: It was built and there it stands. I had a feeling as I looked upon it that I could take that much or let it alone.

Having concluded to take it, you can simply throw the bridle off your imagination, open the pasture gate and let your fancy kick up its heels to its heart's content. That is, you can indulge in any sort of dream and yet not measure up to the fact that the wall is the most stupendous piece of handicraft on earth.

It is not only stupendous because of its length, but because its builders backed away from no natural barriers. If Pike's Peak had been in the road of that wall, the builders would have strung it over that rocky, snow-bound pinnacle like a necklace of pearls. For the wall, where I studied it, crawls like a snake up sheer precipices, drops down break-neck ledges and squirms over needle-pointed peaks with every appearance of having been reared to win some sort of a bet that it could be done.

This effect of grotesque magnitude is emphasized by the seeming herd of walls which you find all about you. You face the wall at one point and watch it worm its way over the top of a mountain and lose itself at the crest. Then you can turn squarely around and you will find it twisting along the hills back of you. Which-

ever way you turn you confront the wall, and every step you take changes your view of it and brings new sections of it into sight, to the front and rear and to either side. This effect is due to the fact that the builders followed the backbone of the mountain range. They located the structure only on the highest points, and as the mountains at this point are jumbled together badly and cross and criss-cross one another in a tangle of ridges, the wall doubles and redoubles on itself in a completely bewildering way.

When you begin to study the general plan you come to understand why it was not an effective means of defense. I have studied a good many walls in China with considerable curiosity. Most of the walls around Chinese cities are constructed on the theory of increasing the job of the invading scalers by locating the wall on a steep rock. This gave the defenders on the wall more of a chance to knock the invaders off as they attempted to climb over. In most cases the walls built on these rocky cliffs were further protected by a big moat, usually a string of lakes, so that the invading host had to swim for it before the climb began, thus affording the defenders opportunity to muss the attacking party all up before they reached even the bottom of the cliff. But in all these cases the wall

builders were careful to keep the grade of the top of the wall pretty level, or when a summit was to be mounted to make the upward grade of the wall gradual. Evidently the reason for this was that the defenders realized that if the wall was given a sharp upward turn it exposed everybody on that part of it to an angle fire. I don't know how the northern hordes broke into China, nor does anybody else, but I imagine it was done because the deep mountain valleys in this part of China made it impossible for a wall to be defended. Against the bows and arrows and battering rams of those days a small number of men behind or rather on top a level wall could hold an army. But where the wall dropped down into a ravine at a sharp angle everybody occupying that part of the wall must have been shot up in great shape, and the invaders undoubtedly came through with a rush. Some of these sections of the wall are so steep that they are nothing more than gigantic stone stairways, with every foot behind the parapets open to view from the valley—as clear an invitation to an enfilading fire as one army ever gave to another.

I climbed to the top of the wall at several points and examined it with particularity. It is about forty feet high, about eighteen feed wide and well paved on top. Every five hundred feet

there is a big square tower. The wall itself is constructed of smooth stand stone, three by three by five feet. There is no such stone in this vicinity. The parapets are built of big black brick, about six times the size of modern building brick, and so are the towers. The wall is filled with a flint-like rock of which the surrounding mountains are composed. The wall does not look old, but it does look stable, the most lasting thing I have ever seen.

I don't suppose any American ever comes to the great wall and stands upon it without wanting to run an automobile on it. It would make a cracker-jack highway. Of course you would have to cut out the mountain grades, but for most of the fifteen hundred miles it is level, and with a little patching here and there a man could "throw her into high" and scoot across China with a view of the country beneath him all the way. And if Mr. Ford should take a few millions and buy the old thing for the benefit of his future patrons in China, the old wall would serve for the first time in history its only practical use to mankind.

There is another thing about the wall. It doesn't let you moralize long. Of course, you no sooner plant your feet on its ancient stones than you begin to philosophize. "Here," you

say, "is evidence of a gigantic folly and a gigantic injustice. Here the labor of millions of men was consumed in the construction of a military toy. Here humanity was ground into a dynasty's monument to fear." The very stones are eloquent with the enormous futility of the work. But that mood doesn't last long. For suppose China hadn't built the wall. Suppose that those millions of men had labored to increase the national wealth and China's coffers had filled to bursting with gold and she had waxed great and proud and self-sufficient, as she surely would have. The northern hordes would have come and taken the country anyway. The wall didn't stop them. Neither would a national prosperity have stopped them. For, if you get any lesson out of the wall at all, it is just this, that neither a wall nor wealth is an adequate means of defense. A nation's best defense is in the spiritual grace and the individual courage, mental, moral and physical, of its citizens. And the greater that grace and courage the less emphasis it puts on the necessities of defense. The old Romans had a saying that a warrior should develop his right, his sword arm, and let his left, the shield arm, take care of itself. The old Chinese dynasty which built the wall and lost it paid too much attention to its left arm.

XLIII

CHINA'S CHIEF REFORMER

DR. SUN-YAT-SEN, the first president of the Chinese republic, said to me at his home in Shanghai: "As our government problems arise and we proceed to solve them we must have patience. If you don't start right, right at the beginning, then you must work always thereafter with your problems, because you did not start right."

Now, I am pretty certain that that statement seems quite commonplace. It did to me at first. But as I mulled it over, it grew to be quite remarkable. If you will read it over again, you will see a whole encyclopedia in it.

Most of the great religious leaders, the historical crusaders and the political reformers of first magnitude argue from a premise of perfection. That is, a perfect condition is possible, if man would accept it. It becomes impossible because man muddles his own situations. This is the story of the Garden of Eden and the intro-

duction of Sin. A poor start necessitated the Mosaic code. It is also the story of the sledge hammer insistence of Jesus Christ in the Sermon and the stubborn popular rejection of it which necessitated the involved dialectics of Paul. It also is the story of the ideal of the American colonies, and the compromise in the constitution, which necessitated the desperately jealous care of the democracy by contending political parties ever since. Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen holds that liberty is a condition which man may know by accepting, but which if he rejects, in ever so slight a degree, he must thereafter struggle perpetually to attain. It is for this reason that all really great reformers hate, to the bottom of their souls, compromise, the compromise which, in both the spiritual and political domain, is the world's great tragedy, making both sanctification and liberty objects to be attained, rather than states of being to be enjoyed.

There is no question in my mind that Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen purposed to set up an ideal republic in China. He had that slant. But as soon as the Republic was set up, he had to step aside for a man with a minimum of ideals, but a maximum of military powers—Yuan Shih Kai. Within three years Yuan Shih Kai was well on his way

to an upset of the Republic and the institution of a monarchy. Sun and others thwarted him and re-established the republic, but the day of the perfect democracy and its opportunity had passed away and the day of compromise had come in. So that China hereafter must struggle to encompass liberty. This is the way of the world. It always has been. I was interested in discovering just how Dr. Sun viewed the situation. His view is given in the quotation I have made. As a practical politician he knows the problems of China must be worked out with infinite patience and in the best way the material in hand allows. I am not contending, of course, that if Dr. Sun and the other reformers, past and present, had had their way, things would have been different. For no reformer has ever had his way.

Moreover, I am completely satisfied that Dr. Sun has given up Utopia as a model and is intensely interested in the concrete, red-blooded contests of immediate politics, where a man thanks his stars at the end of every day that he has got so far without catastrophe.

For instance, I was met at the vestibule of Dr. Sun's home by a soldier, not a perfunctory, butler-like, card-receiving soldier, but a man with a gun and a purpose to stop you, until he

knew your business and had entirely cleared away his suspicion that you had come to do murder. His uniform evidenced that he had slept in the vestibule all night. He held me up until a civilian servant got my card, and walking in I met Dr. Sun face to face, for with the unconcern of conventionality characteristic of reformers he was coming himself to the door to receive me.

He led me into a comfortable parlor, without anything Chinese in it except himself. The walls had pictures in taste, the chairs were upholstered in leather and there was a bright anthracite fire in an open fireplace. But I knew instantly that I had never met before another Dr. Sun. There has been ground into his eyes the inevitable placid resignation of the man with an altruistic idea who sees it trampled on daily, but who goes on fighting for its fragments. There are some people in China who will tell you that Sun is a fake. He isn't. He is a tragedy. He has suffered everything for his idea of a free China. A good share of his life has been spent with a price on his head. But he has played his cards fearlessly, and he will play them fearlessly to the end. And as I looked at him I knew instinctively that this man would die a tragic death. It is as certain as

sunrise that some day he will be led out and beheaded or shot by a file of soldiers who will feel afterward that somehow the wrong thing was done. For you can put it down as an axiom that no single forward step in human liberty has ever been taken but that somewhere, somehow, sometime, some man has paid the price.

There is to be found occasionally a rare silver dollar in China, known as the Sun Dollar. It was minted while Sun was president, and when Yuan Shih Kai drove Sun out of the country these coins were destroyed. The Sun dollar shows Sun in profile and makes him utterly insignificant. His profile is not so in fact. I studied it. The artist was simply off his feed when the dollar was designed. Sun's face is strong, his mouth sensitively kind, his eyes placidly, almost pleasantly tragic. He is a little man wrapped up in a sack suit, fairly well tailored and neatly pressed. He speaks English easily, and his voice is as soft as the purr of a south breeze across the prairie late in the afternoon at the end of June—that is, it doesn't vary, and is so gentle as to be almost sleepy.

For instance, I said: "There are some people in China who believe that the Republic will not last; that the young emperor will be put upon the throne in Peking again." Without the sign

of an accent, without a gleam in his dark, sleepy eyes, but in a monotone as detached from human affairs as a rumble of thunder in a distant cloud, Sun answered: "He would not stay long upon his throne." I could have laughed outright, though I did not risk even a smile. My mind flashed back to the awful wreck of the Manchu city at Nanking, to the starving, gaunt-eyed Manchus at King-Chow, to the ragged, dirty, pitiable Manchu beggars in the streets of Peking. No, he would not stay long upon his throne.

I asked Sun about a reform in the currency system—for China's system is atrocious. He said it would come. I asked him about the railroads. He said they would be built. I asked him about a system of public schools. It would come in time. I asked him about the presence of soldiers everywhere—the burden they must be upon the people and the anomaly they presented in a republic in time of peace. He answered that it was a survival of an old idea of might. I asked him about the element of public opinion, and questioned its existence in China. He said it was forming—that it was a growth—and it is.

I asked him about "squeeze." Nine out of ten white men in China will tell you that the trouble

with China is "squeeze"—the mutual hold-up which pervades all public service, depleting public revenues and corrupting public life. Most of the foreigners in China hold that any reform in this respect is absolutely hopeless. Dr. Sun said, "No, it is not hopeless. It came down from the old days. It will be reasonably corrected in time."

I covered the basic problems of a republic. In all of them he took the optimistic view. Yet I know that in doing it Dr. Sun was fighting the rear-guard action which is the lot of every reformer. For once he had planned for the scientific location of railroads in China—railroads placed to serve the whole country with a maximum of efficiency—something which no nation has yet done, and none probably ever will do. No crazy man, for instance, could have located the railroads of the United States as they have been located and have gotten them crazier—and while we will work back to a coherent unified system in the end, the crazy pattern will always be with us—because we didn't start right. We didn't think of the correct thing in time. Sun did, but he had to give up.

Once, too, Sun had the idea of a financial system, based on the exchange of the products of labor—putting that age-old instrument of tor-

ture—interest—on the shelf with the rack and thumb screws. But the world prefers to look upon its medium of exchange as a commodity, and Sun had to give that up, too. For now he is earnestly, purposefully devoted to keeping the Republic on its feet and teaching it laboriously the way to liberty. For "if you don't start right, right at the beginning, then you must work always thereafter with your problems, because you did not start right."

XLIV

AMERICAN TRADERS IN THE ORIENT

ARE we Americans making headway in trade in China? We are. We have plunged into the Oriental market lickety-split. Most of our ginger came after the European war began. The other nations—except Japan, of course—lost ground as we gained.

All other nationals knock America and American goods so much that you just naturally put on your fighting clothes and prepare to wipe out all comers.

That is, you can't be an American in China without gathering the entire American brood under your wings and getting ready to battle the whole world. The oil, the tobacco, the steel organizations all look different in China, because they are American, and the whole world is bucking them because they are.

The fact is that we have the rest of the world scared in business. The Britisher sniffs and sneers at Americans and their wares, because he

is afraid of us. So do the other nationals. I don't blame them for being scared, for when it comes to business, we are certainly some little steppers. For a long, long time we were not interested in China—it was so far away and we were so busy at home that we didn't care. When the world war got Americans interested in business abroad they began to look towards China. Then they started to edge in. And the way Americans are doing it is a caution and no mistake. The Americans attacked with kerosene, tobacco, sewing machines, typewriters, machinery, electric appliances, hardware, drugs, dry goods, canned goods, concrete, structural steel, printing presses, iron bedsteads and anything else which came handy.

We roll up the opposition and throw them overboard when it comes to business. I don't think Americans generally realize just what we can do. We have traded around among ourselves so long and got so used to mutual hard-hitting that we don't realize how much rush and punch we have. We are probably the greatest merchants in the world. We can get the goods out, show 'em, sell 'em, bank the money and spend it while the ordinary trader is deciding on what price tag to put on his wares. The Japanese has as much speed as we have, but he

has also handicaps, and if we set our heart on it, we will put him out of it, too. One Japanese handicap is that he doesn't deliver invariably to sample. That is, his competitors charge, he sometimes cheats. And you don't cheat a Chinaman twice. We are pretty slick traders, but we don't cheat on samples. An American traveling man told me that he got ten per cent. more on the same contracts, in competition with the Japanese, right along. We deliver the goods, as ordered. The Japanese doesn't always do that.

The whole bunch dread us. We do things in such a slap-dash, overwhelming sort of way. One of our oil companies has tanks planted all over China, with an American flag fluttering from every tank. You can't find a Chinese city, no matter how obscure, that you won't stumble across an American sewing machine store. We just rush in kind of careless like and take possession. There is speed to us—speed that you can't see at home because you are used to it.

There is another thing about us Americans that you can't see at home, but you do see in China. We are not high priced in comparison with competition, and we give every ounce of quality possible under the price. I can illustrate that by telling about a traveling cap I

bought—what you would call a golf cap. I tried a British store in Shanghai and they wanted two dollars gold for one. It wasn't worth it. So I went around to a store which had an American cap which I bought for one dollar gold. Now, the American cap wasn't as good as the British cap. The British cap would wear for five years—the American cap, say, for two years. But the point is here—who wants to wear a cap for five years? Americans don't. We turn the trick by producing an article of middling quality and we get a low price on it by volume of production. It is really democracy creeping into merchandise. There are some Britishers better dressed than Americans, but there are more well-dressed Americans than there are well-dressed men in any other country under the sun. That is to say, we work to a pretty comfortable average in America, and hold it.

In business we get along famously with the Chinese. In fact, Americans and Chinese were made to trade with each other. Both have a good deal of humour in trade. Both enjoy a good contest. Both have a lot of the gambling element in them, call it speculation if you want a milder word, and both are rattling good losers. Both are "good pay." I met a rich Chinese one

day, and in the course of conversation accused him of being a rich man. "I am not," he said. "I would be if I had all that was owing to me." "How much is that?" I asked. "Well," he said, "foreigners alone owe me one hundred thousand dollars that I will never see." "Is there an American among them?" I asked. "Not one," he said, "not a single American. I have loaned them thousands upon thousands. But Americans pay."

A remark like that makes you feel pretty good in China, particularly if you have just bumped into a few Europeans who were roasting America.

Now, we have been weak on several points. One—and it is minor—is that we do not know how to pack goods. We do it shabbily, and we lose by it. We ought to establish a school of correct packing. Another point, and it is a very serious one, is that we have had no American merchant ships to speak of. We have had to ship in foreign bottoms, and they all give us the worst of it. We will straighten out both these delinquencies, and then nothing will stop us from being the prize package among the vendors of the world.

XLV

THE LEAVEN OF EAST AND WEST

SUMMING up my whole experience in China, I have concluded that the Chinese Republic will make a go of it. And I base my conclusion on as airy and fairy a proposition as luck. Luck is with the country.

Now, luck is a base intruder in a world of fixed rules, of logical causes and effects, of sane and expected results arising from sane endeavors. No well-ordered intellect ought to acknowledge the existence of luck for a minute, and every well-ordered intellect does.

The truth is that everything in China argued against the institution of a Republic. The oldest autocracy in the world, the absence of public opinion, the inherent pacifism of the people, the survival of ancient customs having nothing in common with democracy, the presence of the powers of the earth as partners in every Chinese proposition, these elements not only made the creation of a Republic a fanciful flight of the

imagination, but its perpetuation a seeming impossibility.

But the Republic was created and it has hung on. The feng-shui is right. Feng-shui, as I told you, is the Chinese science of luck. I left China without mastering even the rudiments of the science, but it is here, the Chinese believe in it and it is working for the Republic.

The war which Japan made upon China and the Boxer outbreak exposed the Manchu dynasty as an empty egg-shell. Without these events the democrats of China could not have dared even to dream. There was not enough left of the dynasty for the European powers to attempt to save it. Any sort of an old assumption of authority shoved into Peking would have answered for a government in the absence of anything. So the Republic was set up on its wobbly legs. Its president, Yuan Shih Kai, nursed it along for a while in great doubt and then concluded that it ought to be put out of its misery. A few provinces, or rather, a very few men in a few provinces, believed that it ought not to be choked to death in any such fashion. They revolted, and they were in the midst of their trial of strength with Yuan Shih Kai when the feng-shui operated. Yuan Shih Kai died. His death, an undramatic, peaceful, stretched-

out-in-bed affair, was one of the most moving events in the history of the world. It did two things. First, it restored the Republic to its friends. Second, it built up the prestige of the Republic among the people of China themselves, convincing them that the Republic had the elements of success in it.

There was another thing—every day the European war continued tamped the foundations of the Chinese Republic a little firmer, a little more solid. There are two reasons for this. First, the European nations have been so busy they could not interfere with the internal affairs of China, and, second, the war brought a measure of prosperity to China itself which predisposes the people to the Republican form. Few Europeans in China have a kind word for the Chinese Republic. They don't like Republics anyway, and they are inclined to dismiss the Oriental attempt with a sneer. If their hands hadn't been tied, they would have been busy tearing the Chinese Republic into little bits, exaggerating every robbery into a revolution and making a crime of every little weakness the new government showed. But, whether by feng-shui's work or not, the Chinese Republic has been measurably let alone by the superior, and often over-critical, monarchists from Europe. They had their

hands in one another's hair so long and so tight that they forgot that China existed. There was one exception—Japan. Japan saw her chance to butt in and grab off China while the other nations were fighting. She went at the job with a will, but it didn't come through just as she planned. China showed a little pluck and delayed the game, and while Japan may be still anxious to gobble up her big neighbor, every day makes it more and more improbable that she can do it.

China is still intact, and every day it is becoming a little more difficult for her enemies to break down China's confidence in herself. This is helped out, in turn, by the circumstance that times are fairly good in China, so far as Chinese experience goes. The country isn't prosperous as we know prosperity, of course. China is a country where for centuries people have died by the hundreds of thousands periodically of famine. Tens of thousands are born hungry and die hungry. Prosperity doesn't mean in China a Ford in the barn and a Victrola in the parlor. It means escape from death through cold or starvation. The war in Europe helped make times good in China. The Republic gets some of the credit for this. It would get all the blame if times were hard.

This is China as I have seen it—an ancient civilization struggling to keep afloat as a new democracy—and doing it by main strength, awkwardness and luck. But she is doing it—and if she succeeds, there is coming into the world for four hundred million human beings a greater measure of happiness than they and their ancestors for four thousand years have ever known.

No man can be sure that he has given in print the impression he intended, but I have tried to get China to you just as China came to me, through my eyes, ears and nose.

The big outstanding fact in my mind in conclusion is this: The two foremost elements of the world are the doctrines of Jesus Christ and democracy. To me they are one and the same; making the leaven which must eventually leaven the whole lump, East as well as West.

The End.

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